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RECOLLECTIONS *of a* PIONEER

BY

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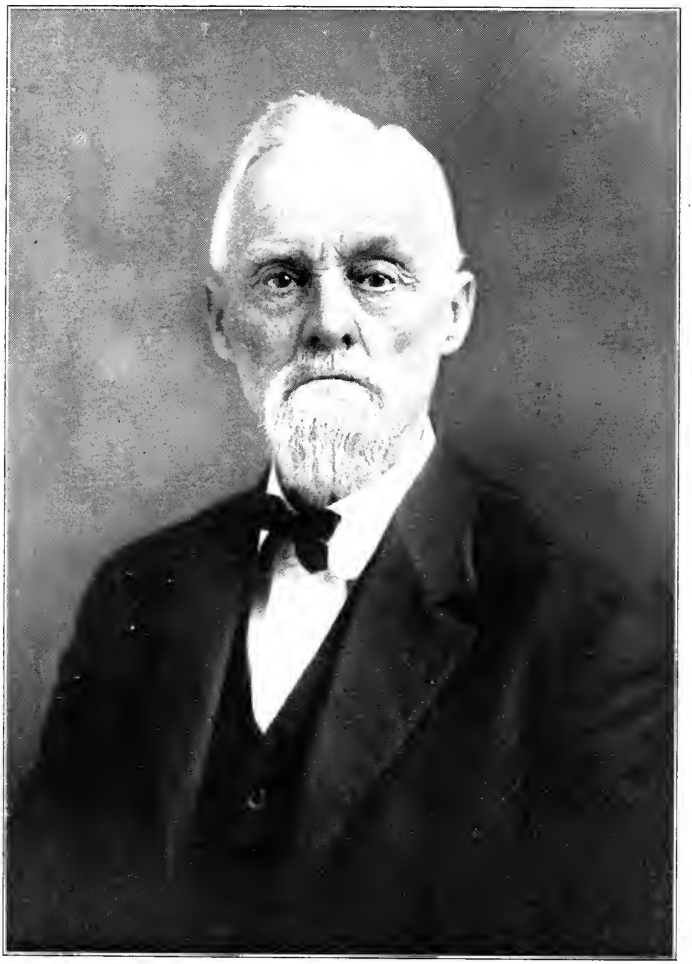

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J. W. (WATT) GIBSON

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Press of Nelson-Hanne Printing Co.
107 South Third Street
St. Joseph, Mo.

FOREWORD.

The following pages are entirely from memory. I kept no notes or other record of the events I have attempted to relate, but I am sure my memory has not often deceived me. My early responsibilities compelled me to give close attention to the things which transpired about me and thus fixed them permanently in my mind. In fact, most of the experiences which I have attempted to relate were of such personal consequence that I was compelled to be alert and to know what was passing.

I undertook the present task at the solicitation of many friends and acquaintances who urged that my recollections of a period, now fast passing out of personal memory, ought to be preserved. It is probable that I have made a good many errors, especially, in my attempts to locate places and to give distances, but it must be remembered that we had no maps or charts with us on the plains and that but few state lines or other sub-divisions were in existence. The location of the places where events occurred with reference to present geographical lines has been my most difficult task.

J. W. (WATT) GIBSON.

St. Joseph, Mo., August 15, 1912.

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CHAPTER I.

Early Days in Buchanan County.

I was born in Bartow County, Georgia, on the 22nd day of January, 1829. Sometime during my infancy, and at a period too early to be remembered, my father and his family moved to East Tennessee, where we lived until I was ten years old. About this time reports concerning the Platte Purchase and its splendid farming land began to reach us. I do not now recall the exact channel through which these reports came, but I think some of our relatives had gone there and had written back urging us to come. My father finally yielded and in the spring of 1839 sold his Tennessee farm and prepared for the long journey overland. I was old enough at the time to take some note of what passed, and I remember that my father received four thousand dollars for his land in Indiana "shin plasters." I recall also the preparations that were made for the journey—the outfitting of the wagons, gathering the stock together, and most important of all, the part assigned to me. I was provided with a pony, saddle and bridle and given charge of a herd of loose cattle and horses. We had a rude camp outfit and carried along with us all the household plunder with which we expected to start life in the new country. As may be well imagined, there was not a great deal of it, although the family was large. In those days the people had to be satisfied with the barest necessities. Some idea of the extent of this part of my father's worldly property may be given by saying that the entire outfit, including camp equipment, was loaded into two wagons.

I shall never forget the morning we started. Everything had been loaded the day before, except the articles necessary to the sojourn over night. We were up bright and early, had breakfast in little better than camp style, and were off before sun up. My father, mother, and the younger children took the first wagon, and one of my brothers and my sisters the second. I was upon my pony and in my glory. The wagons moved forward and I rounded up the cattle and horses and forced them along after the wagons. I was too young to feel any tender sentiment toward the old home or to appreciate the fact that I was leaving it forever, but I remember that my father and mother often looked back, and as we passed over the hill out of sight, I saw them turn and wave a long farewell. Many times since I have thought of that scene and have learned to know full well its meaning to my father and mother.

I cannot recall all the particulars of this toilsome journey, and if I could, they would hardly interest the reader. I remember that I soon lost the enthusiasm of that early morning on which we started and grew very tired and longed for the end of our journey. For a great many days it seemed to me we traveled through a rugged mountain country. The hills were long and toilsome, the streams had no bridges and had to be forded, and I frequently had great difficulty in getting my cattle and horses to follow the wagons. On such occasions, the caravan would stop and the whole family would come to my aid. Of course, there were no fences along the sides of the road and my stock becoming wearied or tempted by the green herbage alongside would wander out into the woods and brush and give me much trouble.

When I think of these difficulties, I do not wonder that I became wearied, but as my life was afterwards ordered, this boyish experience taught me a lesson which many times proved useful.

I remember when we crossed what they said was the line into Kentucky. I could see no difference in the mountains, valleys or the rivers, but somehow I felt that there ought to be a difference and that Kentucky could not be like Tennessee, and yet it was. Here I learned, thus early in life, what so many people find it hard even in later years to appreciate, that names and distances do not make differences and that all places upon the face of the earth, no matter how they vary in physical appearance, are after all very much alike. I believe it is the realization of this fact that makes the difference between the man who knows the world and the one who does not. After a long time, as it seemed to me, we passed out of the mountains and into a beautiful rolling country improved even in that early day with many turnpikes and exhibiting every indication of prosperity. There were negroes everywhere—many more than we had in Tennessee, and I remember hearing them singing as they worked in the fields. I now know that this country was what has since been known as the "Blue Grass Region" of Kentucky, though at the time, I thought the mountains of my old home a much better place to live.

For a long time, even before the journey began, I had heard a great deal about the Ohio River and knew that we must cross it, and when the people along the road began to tell us that we were nearing that stream, I became filled with curiosity to see it and to know what it would be like and to see and experi-

ence the sensation of crossing it on a ferry-boat. Finally we came to the top of a long hill and away off to the north we saw the river winding through a deep valley, and some one, my father, I think, pointed out a mere speck on the surface of the water and told us it was a ferry-boat. When we reached the bank of the river we found the boat tied alongside, and to my surprise, horses, wagons and cattle were all driven upon it. I had no idea that a ferry-boat was such a huge affair. It was run by horse-power, and it took us only a few minutes to reach the farther shore, and I was disappointed that my trip was not a longer one. The landing and unloading took but a few minutes. My father paid the man and we started immediately to climb the hill on the other side. I must not neglect to mention that somewhere on the road in the northern part of Kentucky or immediately after we crossed the river, my father exchanged the "shin plasters" for which he had sold his farm for silver, that currency being at par in that locality. He received four thousand silver dollars. I saw them with my own eyes. He put them in a strong box and loaded them into one of the wagons along with the other luggage.

I do not remember at what point we crossed the Ohio River. I did not, of course, know at the time, and if my father or any member of the family ever told me the place afterwards I have forgotten it; but the event is as vivid in my mind as if it had occurred yesterday.

There was little in our journey across Indiana and Illinois to impress that portion of the road upon my memory. All I recall is in a general way that I could see no familiar mountains, and over parts of the journey I remember that the country appeared to me to be monotonously level. I cannot give the length of

time that was required in making this journey, but I do remember when we reached the Mississippi River. We crossed at Alton, if I am not mistaken, and in place of a horse ferry we had a steam ferry, which was to me a much more wonderful contrivance than the horse ferry on the Ohio. Then the river was so much wider. I remember wondering where all that vast body of water could come from. They told us, when we landed on the opposite shore, that we were in Missouri, and I thought my journey must be nearly ended, but I was never more mistaken. Day after day our wagons trundled along, night after night we went into camp, worn out with the day's journey, only to get up again early in the morning and repeat the same experience.

We reached Tremont Township, Buchanan County, on the 29th day of May, 1839, and straightway settled upon a tract of land about a mile and a quarter southeast of what is now Garrettsburg. A house of some character was the first thing to which my father turned his attention, and it was not long before a rude log cabin was under construction. I was too small to take much part in this work, but I remember that such neighbors as we had were good to us and came and helped. The logs were cut in the woods and dragged to the site of the house and the neighbors and friends came and helped us at the "raising." The house consisted of a single room with a wide fireplace built of rough stone extending nearly across one entire end of the room. The roof was of long split boards laid upon poles or beams in such a way as to shed the water and weighted down by other beams laid on top of them. I do not think a single nail or other piece of iron entered into the construction of the building, but we thought it a great improvement upon the tent life

we had experienced on our journey, and my father was quite proud of his new home. I will not attempt to describe that country as it appeared to me in that early day. In fact the changes have been so gradual that it seems to me to be still very much the same country it was when I first saw it, though when I stop to reflect, I know that this is not so. Most of it was heavy timber. A glade or skirt of prairie passed in now and then from the almost continuous prairie of what is now Clinton County. And I remember distinctly that a stretch of prairie extended from Platte River directly across from where Agency is now located in an east and south easterly direction toward Gower, and thence around to the left where it joined the main body of prairie land. There were no fences to speak of, and deer were as plentiful as in any country I have ever seen. There were few roads and no great need for them and no bridges. The county seat of the county was at old Sparta, and Robidoux's Landing was the most talked of place in the county.

In 1846, my father built a brick house, the first, I think, that was ever erected in the county. It stood about a quarter of a mile south of the present residence of Thomas Barton, a respected citizen of Tremont Township. The brick were made upon the ground and I was old enough at that time to have quite an important part in the work, and it was hard work, too. I helped cut and haul wood with which the brick were burned, and I "off bore" the brick as they were moulded. I carried the brick and mortar as the house was being erected and assisted in putting on the roof, laying floors and finishing the house. It was quite a commodious structure when completed and was considered by all our neighbors and friends who still lived in their log houses as quite a mansion.

Our farming operations were not very extensive. The land all had to be cleared of heavy timber, and I have seen thousands of feet of the finest white oak, walnut and hickory burned up in log heaps, but there was nothing else to be done with it. We had to have the land and there was no use to which we could put such a quantity of timber. The few rails that were needed to fence the field after it was cleared, required only a small portion of the timber that was cut away, and as all the land except the fields was allowed to remain unfenced, there could be no profit in expending time and labor in making rails to be piled up and allowed to decay.

Most of our work was done on the farm with ox teams. Our plows were rude, home-made implements, and the hoe, axe and sickle, or reaping hook, all home-made, were about the only other tools we had. With these and with our slow plodding oxen, we thought we did very well to produce from our stumpy ground enough for the family to subsist on. Even the accomplishment of this small result required the efforts of almost every member of the family. My mother and sisters frequently worked in the fields, and I often saw, in those days, a woman plowing in the field, driving a single cow, using a rude harness without a collar. We cut our wheat with a sickle and our hemp with a hook. We hackled the flax by hand and spun and wove it into linen. My mother and sisters sheared the sheep, washed and picked the wool, carded, spun and wove it into blankets and clothing for the whole family. They took the raw material, green flax and wool on the sheep's back, and made it into clothing for a family of ten. They milked the cows and washed the clothing besides, and then found time to help in the fields. It must not be thought that the men

were idle while this was going on. They worked just as hard, but their tools were so poor and the difficulties so great, and they could accomplish so little that even with all their efforts they sometimes fell behind the women in their tasks.

As may well be imagined, there was little time for a boy or a girl under those conditions to go to school, even if the opportunity had presented itself. We had a school in the neighborhood, however, held for a time at the homes of various members of the community, and later we built a school house. The erection of this building was the first public enterprise, so far as I know or have ever heard, that was undertaken by the people of that community. I was old enough to help in it, and I remember very distinctly the meetings the neighbors had to plan the work of building, and afterwards, I recall the meeting of the men with their teams to do the work. Each man furnished two logs which he had previously cut and hewed to the proper dimensions. These he dragged to the site selected for the building which was, by the way, upon the ground now occupied by the Stamper School House. When the logs were all assembled, the men and boys came in bringing baskets of provisions and food for their oxen and all went to work. The house was "raised," as we called it, by laying the logs one upon the other in the form of a pen, the length exceeding the breadth by about ten feet. The logs were carefully notched and fitted down at the corners so as to eliminate space between them and do away with the necessity of "chinking" to as great an extent as possible. The floor was of logs split half in two and laid the flat side up. The door was of hewed timber and must have been fully two inches thick, and was hung upon wooden hinges. At a proper

height from the ground, one log was sawed out the full length of the building to afford light. The roof was of clap-boards with logs laid upon them to hold them in place. The benches were puncheon—that is a long round log split half in two and hewed to a smooth surface with legs driven into auger holes beneath. The fireplace extended nearly all the way across one end of the room. It was built of rough stone as high as the mantel, and from there up the chimney was of sticks, plastered inside with clay to keep them from burning. A long puncheon was placed at the proper angle just underneath the opening which served as a window, and this constituted our writing desk. When the writing lesson was called, each pupil took his copy book and went to this rude "desk" where he stood until his lesson was finished.

I cannot at this time recall the names of all the men who participated in the work of building that school-house, but among them were George Reynolds, George Jeffers, Donald McCray, Philip McCray, Henry Guinn, Ambrose McDonald, William Bledsoe, Robert Irvin, James Poteet, James Gilmore, Ransom Ridge, Bird Smith, Isaac Auxier, Tom Auxier, my father, George Gibson, and my uncle, James Gibson. Most of these names are familiar to the citizens of this county, and their descendants are still substantial citizens of that community. I had the inestimable privilege of attending school in this building as much as three terms of three months each, and this constituted my entire educational course so far as schools are concerned. The sons and daughters of the men I have named were my school mates and, at this writing, but few of them survive. The men of that day, of course, have all passed to their reward many years since.

It will be easy for the reader to understand me when I say that in that day money, that is currency or specie, was very hard to procure. Fortunately for us we needed very little of it, because there was nothing to buy with it that we could not procure by a sort of trade or barter. We could raise our horses, hogs and cattle, but there was no market for them. If a neighbor happened not to have what another neighbor had beyond his own necessities, some means was devised by which a trade could be entered into and each secure thereby the things he did not previously own. I think hemp was about the only thing we could sell for money. This we took to Robidoux's landing now and then where we procured cash for it, and we then bought such few necessities as our farms did not afford.

It must not be understood that the men of that day were without enterprise. When I look upon the great undertakings of the present day and then recall a venture which my father and older brothers and myself undertook in 1847, I am compelled to believe that of the two, that early enterprise required the greater business courage. I have related how my father received four thousand dollars for his Tennessee farm and how he converted this into silver on the way to Missouri. He had in addition to this quite a sum of money besides and had accumulated some money during the years of his residence here.

In the spring of 1847 he began to purchase from the neighbors around about and from the men in other communities, their surplus cattle, and in this way collected a herd of five hundred. These cattle were driven overland to Iowa where a few of them were sold, thence on to Illinois and across Illinois and through Indiana and Ohio, peddling them out as we went, and

into Pennsylvania, where the last of them were sold. I went along, and we had many hardships, but somehow I did not think so at the time. The trip broke the monotony of my life upon the farm and I was glad to go, even though I often grew very tired and had to endure the exposure to hot sun, wind and rain. We made some money on the cattle—quite a good deal. We got every dollar of it in silver and carried it home on horse back. In 1848, brother Isaac and I took another drove over about the same route for Peter Boyer, who lived near Easton. Our experiences on this trip were very much the same as those of the former trip, and the enterprise netted Boyer a handsome profit.

CHAPTER II.

First Trip to California.

Late in the year 1848 or early in '49, we began to hear wonderful stories about gold in California. News traveled very slowly in those days, and we could depend very little upon its accuracy, but the reports that came convinced us that the discovery had actually been made and we readily pictured in our own minds the fortunes to be had in that country. Difficult as the methods of travel were in those days, we were not without information as to the route and character of the country intervening between us and California. Robert Gilmore, a neighbor of ours, had been overland to Oregon and back, and could tell us very definitely about the country out to a point beyond the Rocky Mountains. The talk of gold, and of an expedition to the country where it had been found, soon became general and it was not long until a party of men was made up to try their fortunes in California. Brother William, brother James and myself agreed to become members of the party, and we rigged up a wagon and four yoke of oxen, laid in a year's provisions, provided ourselves with guns and plenty of ammunition and joined others of a company who had made like provision. I must not neglect to mention that as an important part of our commissary we added a half barrel of good whiskey. We started on the first day of May and stopped over night at St. Joseph. The next day, everything being ready, we crossed the river on the ferry boat and pitched our tents the first night out on Peters Creek. Our party consisted of twenty men and boys, all from Buchanan County.

They were Robert Gilmore and his son Mat, James Gilmore and his son Dave, Ben Poteet, a man by the name of Spires and his son, Milt Gilmore, Lum Perkins, a man by the name of Fish, Charles McCray, Henry McCray, Liel Hulett, Mitch Hulett, old man Greenwood and his two sons, Brother William, Brother James, and myself. We had seven wagons, fifty-eight head of cattle and seven horses.

Robert Gilmore was our pilot. His previous journey over the road as well as his peculiar fitness for the task made the selection of any other person out of the question. He had an accurate memory concerning every point along the road. He knew the courses of the rivers and how to cross the desert divides at the narrowest places to avoid long distances without grazing and water for our cattle. He also knew better than any of us the habits of the Indians, and his experience with them often avoided trouble and saved our property and most likely our lives. He was cool-headed and prudent and as brave a man as I ever knew. It must be remembered that we made no provision whatever to feed our cattle and horses. We expected to move slowly and allow them time to graze for subsistence. During the first part of the journey at the season of the year in which it was made, we experienced no trouble whatever, as grass was very plentiful, but later on, as I shall relate, we often felt sorry for the poor dumb beasts that we had taken from the fine pastures of Buchanan County and driven out into that arid country.

Our second day's journey brought us to Wolf River. During the next few days our journey led us by gradual ascent up on to a high prairie, which must have been the water shed upon which the town of Sabetha is now situated. The whole earth was

covered by abundant verdure, and I recall very distinctly the expansive view which presented itself in every direction from the crests of the ridges as we passed over them. There was not a single human habitation in sight and no evidences that human foot had ever been set upon this land, except the dim outline of the trail we were following. Only one or two companies were ahead of us and the tracks of their wagons and oxen made but little impression upon the fresh grown grass. Farther out the almost total absence of trees made the most vivid impression upon my mind, accustomed as I had been for so many years to a timbered country, and though I could see no evidences that the soil was not productive, I could hardly believe this place would ever be a fit habitation for men. We traveled some days over such country as I have described and no doubt passed over the sites of many present flourishing towns. The sixth or seventh day out, if I remember correctly, we reached the Big Blue. In our journey thus far, we had occasionally seen deer and antelope, but when we began to descend into the valley of the Big Blue we saw great numbers of these animals. On the banks of the river we found in camp a party of eastern emigrants who had left St. Joseph a few days in advance of our train. Their teams were all horses and they had camped for a time in order to lay in a supply of venison. Their horses were then in fine condition and they were riding them out on the prairies chasing the deer and antelope. We camped for the night and next morning, as usual, plodded on. Later in the day we were overtaken by these emigrants who trotted by us with their faster teams and made fun of our equipment. They told us, as they passed, that they would have the gold in California all mined out before we got there.

Some of us, the younger members at least, who had had no experience on the plains, felt that they might be telling us the truth; but Gilmore assured us that we had taken the safer course and that we would reach California long in advance of those men, and that it was doubtful if they would ever get there at all. Weeks later Gilmore had the satisfaction of verifying what he had told us, for we overtook and passed these very trains. Their horses were thin and poor, starved out on the short grass, and famished for water.

From Big Blue we crossed a rolling divide to Little Blue and followed that stream a long distance, then across a high prairie, that seemed to be almost perfectly level. It was on this part of the journey that we had our first disagreeable experience. Up to that time, the boys of the party at least, had looked upon crossing the plains as a great frolic. The weather had been fine. The company was congenial and the novelty of the whole thing kept us well entertained. Shortly after we broke camp one morning and started on a twenty mile drive, it began to rain and continued all day long a steady downpour. We had found no wood with which to cook dinner and had eaten cold victuals, with some relish, believing we would find plenty of firewood at night. We traveled until quite late and finally stopped at a small creek, where other emigrants had camped, but there was no wood, not a stick to be found. The only thing in sight was a tough old log which had been hacked and hewed by preceding emigrants until scarcely a splinter could be chopped from it. The buffalo chips were all wet and it was still raining. The boys were not so gay that night. They managed, after hard work, to get splinters enough off the old log to heat up the coffee and that was the only warm article of diet we had for supper. We made

the best of it and after supper prepared to crawl into wet tents to sleep if we could. Bad as the prospect was, I was happy that it was not my turn to stand guard. It rained all night and next morning the boys who had been on guard were sorry-looking fellows and the cattle and horses little better. I do not remember how we managed to get breakfast, but I do recall that we started early and pushed on still through the rain. The moving warmed us up and we were much better off traveling than in camp.

We reached Platte River late the same day at a point which must have been some miles above the location of the present city of Grand Island, probably about the site of the City of Kearney. The river was running bank full and the only fire wood in sight was on an island out in the stream. The stream, though wide, was not deep, and we rode our horses over and carried back wood enough to make a fire, though it was a very bad one. It stopped raining about night, but remained cloudy and cold and we passed the night with less comfort, I believe, than the night before. Next day we made only twenty miles but stopped long before night at the mouth of a little stream or gulch that descended down into Platte River which we knew as Plum Creek. The wind had blown from the north all day and had chilled us through and through in our wet clothing. The principal inducement to the halt was the canyon through which Plum Creek emptied into the river. It afforded a sheltered camping place and its sides were covered with red cedar which made splendid firewood. We pitched our tents in behind a high bluff and immediately built a blazing fire. Everybody was busy. Blankets were stretched upon poles before the fire and the wet extra clothing was hung out to dry in like

manner. We cooked the best meal the stores would afford and prepared plenty of it. Before night we were all dry and warm, had had plenty to eat, and were again in a happy frame of mind. There was but one thing to prevent complete satisfaction with the situation and that was that at this very point in years gone by several vicious attacks had been made upon emigrants by the Indians. It was a fine place for the Indians to ambush the unwary traveler. Gilmore had learned the story of these attacks on his previous trip and immediately after we had supper he started the members of the company out in various directions to look for Indians. It was an hour or more until sundown, as I recollect, so we climbed to the tops of the hills and inspected the country for miles around. There was not a single sign of Indians anywhere to be seen. He told us to look particularly for smoke as we would probably not see the Indians but would discover the smoke from their fires coming up out of the valleys. The favorable report made to Gilmore did not satisfy him. Weary as we all were, he ordered a double guard that night. I stood with the boys the first half of the night. At sundown the sky had cleared of clouds and the wind had ceased to blow. The whole earth was as still as death. The only sound that broke the silence was the howl of a wolf now and then away off in the distance.

The next morning the camp was astir bright and early. The oxen and horses were rounded up and hitched to the wagons and after a good breakfast we packed the camp outfit and started on our journey up Platte River, following the south bank. The clear sky and bright sunshine soon made us forget the hardships of the two previous days, and our company was again in good spirits. I have not been able to locate

the exact position of Plum Creek. It was out some distance beyond the Grand Island and almost at the beginning of what we called the sand bluffs. I do not recall any incident worth mentioning on the journey up this stream except that in a few days after we left Plum Creek we passed the junction of the North and South Platte. The trail followed the South Platte and we followed the trail. About fifty miles beyond the junction we crossed the South Platte and went over a high ridge and down a steep canyon about five miles in length into the valley of the North Platte. I have never known why this early trail led up the South Platte instead of crossing the main stream at the junction and moving directly up the North Platte, as was done later by all the emigrant trains.

We reached North Platte about night and found a large tribe of Indians in camp. It was no very pleasing prospect to most of us to go into camp so near the Indians, but Gilmore told us that we would not likely have any trouble as Indians were always peaceable when their squaws and pappooses were with them. I never forgot this remark by Gilmore and had occasion many times afterwards, as I shall relate, to observe the truth of his statement. We put a strong guard around the cattle. We did not fear for ourselves, but were alarmed somewhat on account of the cattle, as we expected that the Indians were probably scarce of food and might try to get one or two of them. The Indians seemed to be astir most all night and we imagined that they were watching to catch us off guard, or probably to catch a stray horse or ox that might wander away from the herd. Morning brought us great relief, and we soon packed up and moved on up the North Platte as fast as we could.

Some seventy-five miles or more up the North Platte we passed those strange looking elevations which had the appearance at a distance of immense buildings in ruins and which have been mentioned by so many of the early emigrants. Two of these formations which stood side by side were especially noticeable. They both rose abruptly from the level table land to a height of two hundred feet or more. The larger and taller of the two was not so well proportioned as the smaller, but both of them easily gave the impression, viewed from the path of our trail, of great castles with wings and turrets, all tumbling down and wasting away. Gilmore told us that the earlier travelers on the Oregon trail had called these formations the "court houses." Some distance beyond these curiosities we came to Chimney Rock, which I am sure every one who passed over the trail remembers. It stood out in the valley of the Platte several hundred feet from the main bluff of the river and rose to a height of nearly three hundred feet, as we estimated. The base covered a considerable area of ground and the top was probably fifty feet across. It was a mixture of sand, clay and stones, and the action of the weather had crumbled much of the upper portions about the base.

A little beyond Chimney Rock we came to Scott's Bluffs, which we reached late in the afternoon. We drove into a beautiful little valley and camped for the night. Just about dark the most terrific thunder storm I ever experienced in my life broke upon us. The whole valley seemed to be lit up in a blaze of fire and the thunder was deafening. Some three or four emigrant trains which we had overtaken were camped in this valley and next morning we counted fifteen cattle that had been killed by bolts of lightning. For-

tunately none of them belonged to us. Scott's Bluffs is a single row of hills or perpendicular cliffs standing out in the valley between the main table land and the channel of the river. They are much like Chimney Rock in formation and are of various forms and moulds and present a strange appearance from the path of the trail. We passed for miles between these bluffs and the table land with the river over beyond the bluffs.

Fort Laramie was our next point, some sixty miles farther on. The fort is situated on Laramie River about a mile above its union with the North Platte. Here we saw the first white man, except the emigrants who were outward bound with us, since leaving home. We were given a very hearty welcome by the soldiers and the few others who lived there. They asked us many questions and told us they had had no news from home all winter until the emigrant trains began to arrive. The Indians were constantly about them and they had to be very careful to avoid trouble with them. Their greatest difficulty was to procure firewood, which they found some considerable distance from the fort and over the river. They told us they always sent a guard of soldiers out with the wagons when they went after wood. We camped there over night and I was on picket. Next morning at daylight I saw a beautiful mound not far away,and as I was anxious to investigate everything, I walked over to it. I found it was an Indian burying ground, and was literally covered with human and animal bones which had been placed around, apparently in an effort to decorate, and human skulls seemed to be a particular favorite. Hundreds of them it seemed to me lay grinning at me. I am sure had I known this grewsome sight was so close to me I could never have been induced to stand guard

all night in the darkness. I was but a boy then and this scene horrified me. I soon learned, however, not to be afraid of dead Indians.

After a rest of a day or two under the protection of the Fort, we started forward, moving across a high, mountainous country which occupied the wide bend in the North Platte River. As I recall, the distance across this strip of country is probably one hundred and fifty miles or more. Many places were very rugged and we experienced much difficulty in making our way. On this portion of the road we had great difficulty also with the Indians—that is we continually feared trouble. We were not attacked at any time nor did we lose any of our horses or cattle, but we lived in continual fear both of our lives and of our property. The Crow and Sioux tribes occupied this land and they were war-like and troublesome savages. Scarcely a man in the company dared go to sleep during the whole journey from Fort Laramie to the point where we reached Platte River again, opposite the mouth of Sweetwater. It was in this very country, as I shall relate hereafter, that these Indians tried to kill and rob my brothers and myself in '51, and in '55, while my brother James and my youngest brother Robert were bringing a drove of cattle across, my brother Robert, only seventeen years old, was killed. I think all the early travelers across the plains dreaded the Indians on this portion of the road more than any other obstacle to be found on the entire journey, not excepting the alkali deserts of Utah and Nevada. When we again reached Platte River it was very high and the current very swift. It was out of the question to attempt fording it, and it looked for a time as if our progress would be retarded perhaps for many days. It would serve no purpose to attempt to find a better

place to cross, for from the amount of water in the river, we felt quite certain we could find no place within one hundred miles where the wagons could be driven over. We had one satisfaction left to us and that was that we had plenty of water and plenty of grass, and if we had to stay on this side of the river any considerable time we were in no danger of losing our stock. We camped and rested a day and thought about the situation. Finally we decided to try rafting the wagons over and herding the cattle across. We cut four good sized cottonwood logs from the timber which grew near to the stream, fastened ropes to them and pushed them in the water. They were then tied firmly together and anchored to the shore. We then unloaded the wagons, took off the boxes or beds, and set one upon these logs. We then reloaded this bed and four men with long poles got upon the raft and some one on the bank untied the rope. I thought from the way this rude ship started down stream that it would reach St. Joseph in about three days if it kept up that rate of speed. The current caught it and dashed it along at a great rate and I was considerably alarmed, I remember, for a good portion of our provisions had been placed in the wagon box. The boys on the raft, however, kept their heads and though none of them were much accustomed to the water, they understood enough about it to avoid upsetting the craft. Little by little they pushed and paddled toward the middle of the stream and finally brought it up to shore probably a mile down stream. After anchoring the raft the articles loaded into the wagon bed were removed, placed upon the bank and finally the wagon bed was taken off and likewise placed on high ground. The boys then with great difficulty towed the raft along the shore up stream to a point far enough above the camp

on the opposite bank to enable them to pilot it back to the desired landing place. They finally brought it up when, after anchoring it firmly, the running gears of the wagon were rolled down and pushed out upon the raft, the axles resting on the logs and the wheels extending down into the water. This cargo was ferried across in the same manner. In this way after much labor, paddling and poling this raft back and forth, our entire outfit was landed safely on the opposite side of the stream. Our belongings were, however, pretty widely scattered, because the boys always unloaded at the place they were able to land. It took much time to again rig up the wagons and collect the provisions and camp equipment and get it all together again.

We had allowed our cattle to remain on the east side of the river during this operation, and after everything was ready on the opposite side we rounded them up and pushed them into the water. They swam across in fine shape, the men swimming their horses after them. It was a great relief to all of us to feel that we were safely across and to realize that we had saved a good many days, perhaps, by the effort we had made. We were especially desirous of keeping well in front of the emigrant trains that we knew to be upon the road in order that our oxen and horses might have better grazing and we felt that by the accomplishment of the task which had just been finished we had probably set ourselves in advance of many of the trains.

After a good rest we moved on and soon entered the valley of Sweetwater River which we followed for many miles. Toward the head waters of this stream we passed Independence Rock, which, even in that day, was a marked natural curiosity much spoken of by travelers. There were many names cut in the smooth face of this immense boulder and we added our own

to the list. A long toilsome climb after leaving Independence Rock brought us to the crest of the continental divide from which we descended into the valley of Green River. This is an extensive basin and we were a good many days passing through it, but met with no occurrences worthy of special mention. As we passed out of the valley, our road led us over a high range of mountains and I shall always remember the view which presented itself in front of us as we reached the top. The valley of Bear River lay before us for many miles. The view was obstructed only by the fact that the eye had not the power to see all that was spread before it. In all my experience in the mountains, I can at this moment recall no place that presents so striking a picture as the one which remains in my memory of this scene. I cannot locate the place upon the map, except approximately, though I have often tried to do so. In those days we had few names. There were no county lines and no towns by which to locate natural objects so they might be pointed out to others. Even the mountain ranges and many of the smaller streams had either not received names or we had not heard them. The place I have been attempting to describe was near the extreme western border of Wyoming and must have been about opposite Bear Lake in Idaho, perhaps a little north.

An incident occurred at this place which served to impress it upon my mind independent of its natural beauties. Shortly before we approached the crest of the mountain we began to see emigrant wagons ahead. Finally we noticed what appeared to be an immense train stretching out in front of us. On nearer approach we discovered that some forty or fifty wagons which had fallen into the Oregon trail at various places along the line were blocked, apparently by the difficul-

ties attending a descent of the opposite side of the mountain. We halted our teams and went forward on foot and discovered that there was but one place where the descent could be made at all and that was along a steep, rough canyon at one place in which the wagons had to be let down by hand. We approached and watched the operation for an hour or two. The teams and wagons in proper turn passed down to this abrupt place where the oxen were taken off and driven down. The wagons, rough-locked with chains, were then let down by long ropes, a great many men holding to the ropes to prevent the wagon from running away. It was very slow work and we immediately saw that a delay of three or four days at least was ahead of us if we waited to take our turn down this embankment. A conference was called as soon as our men got back to the wagons. Gilmore said he was not willing to believe that the point these emigrants had selected was the only place where the teams could get down, so he and a few more of our company started to the left of the trail to seek a new place. After about two hours, Gilmore and his men came back and said they thought they had found a place and directed the teams to move forward. A long winding drive down a spur or ridge that led off to the left of the canyon brought us to the place Gilmore had discovered. I went up and took a look and I confess that I was very much afraid we could not make it. There was not a tree, nor a log, nor anything else out of which we could make a drag to tie behind the wagons and thus retard them as they moved down the slope. I saw that Gilmore had some plan in his mind, however, and waited to see it develop. He ordered the three front yoke of oxen off the front wagon and directed that they be taken to the rear of

the wagon leaving the wheel yoke hitched to the tongue. These three yoke of oxen were tied by a chain to the rear axle. The wheels were all four rough-locked with chains made fast and tight. When this was done we gathered our whips and told the oxen to move on. As the wheel yoke started forward the wagon pitched down upon them. They set their feet forward and laid back upon the tongue. When the chain tightened on the three yoke tied to the rear, they, like the yoke in front, set their feet and laid back upon the chain. Then the whole—wagon and oxen—went plowing down the mountain side more than one hundred yards before the ground became level enough to release the wheels. It was a great relief to be able to unlock the wheels and release the oxen and know that all was safe. The six other wagons repeated this experience in turn. The whole descent had required but little more than two hours and we found ourselves well down into the valley of Bear River two days ahead of time, and best of all, in the lead of those emigrants who were waiting to let their wagons down by hand over on the other road.

Soda Springs on Bear River was our next point. We reached it after a two days' journey from the point where we had descended the mountain. Here I saw another wonder—to me. Water, almost boiling, spurted right up out of the ground. One spring in particular which they told us had been named Steamboat Spring was especially noticeable. Every three or four minutes it would throw a jet of water up four or five feet high, then subside. Just about the time every thing seemed to be getting settled, the water would gush out again. This continued at regular intervals night and day and may, for all I know, still be going on. There were a number of hot springs, besides

several other springs, the water of which was strongly impregnated with soda. We halted a little while here to rest and to inspect this great wonder and then pushed on in a north-westerly direction toward Fort Hall, which is located on Snake River. This required about a three days' drive, as I remember. We knew at the time that this course took us considerably out of the way, but we had no information as to the barriers to be encountered by an attempt to shorten the route, so we were content to follow the beaten trail.

I remember an incident which occurred at Fort Hall. We had fallen in with a train from Jackson County which was known as Hayes' train, and we all journeyed together to Fort Hall. A government fort was located there and Hayes found in the fort, a negro man who had run off from his Jackson County plantation six years before. Hayes instead of asserting ownership over this negro and compelling him to go back into servitude, made a contract with him to drive one of his teams through to California and work one year for him in California, after which the negro was to have his freedom. This seemed to suit the negro exactly and he picked up his long gad and started after the oxen. We all moved together down Snake River to the mouth of Raft River, and on this part of the journey an incident occurred which caused all of us a good deal of uneasiness. Hayes had a bright lad with him about sixteen years old who was always playing pranks. He also had a driver who was dreadfully afraid of Indians. One night after we had camped, the lad took a red blanket and slipped away from the camp around near to where the driver was standing guard. He threw the blanket over his shoulders after the fashion of the Indians and secreted himself behind an

obstruction, and at the proper time, slipped out of his place of concealment and started toward the driver. The driver ran just as the boy had anticipated, but when the boy started to follow, playing Indian all the time, the driver halted long enough to put a load of shot into the boy. Fortunately the shot was not fatal, but the boy was dreadfully wounded and had to be hauled in one of the wagons clear on to California. We had little or no means of giving him attention and the poor boy suffered a great deal, but he finally got well.

When we reached the mouth of Raft River, a small stream which flows into the Snake River from the south, we halted for a conference. Hayes with his train was accompanying us, but he knew no more about the country than we. It was clear that we must break away from the Oregon trail at some point in that immediate vicinity and it occurred to us that this little river would afford the most likely passage to the crest of the divide from which we could descend into the valley of the Humboldt. Accordingly our oxen were turned out of the beaten path and headed over an unknown stretch of country. We experienced very little difficulty that I now recall so long as we were able to follow the river, but by and by the stream became very small and led us into a rugged, mountainous country. After much climbing and wandering about we reached the crest of a divide which is now called the Raft River Mountains; passing down the farther slope of these mountains we encountered a dreadful alkali desert before reaching the main stem of the Humboldt River. The men, horses and cattle suffered greatly. The alkali dust raised by the moving teams parched the throat and nostrils and lack of water denied either to man or beast any relief. Fortunately

for us, this did not last many days. Whether by accident or from good judgment, we soon located a good sized stream of water which eventually proved to be one of the main prongs of Humboldt River. We followed this stream probably two hundred miles or more, and while the grazing was very short, we had plenty of water and were able to get along.

One night just before we reached Big Meadow, while we were camped alongside the Humboldt River, a band of Digger Indians slipped into our herd and drove two of the cattle away. Next morning after rounding up the cattle these oxen were missed and search was immediately instituted. Bob and James Gilmore, Charles McCray and brother William got on their horses and made a wide circle about the camp. They discovered tracks leading toward the mountains and followed them. After they had gone several miles and could still see nothing of the cattle, they became convinced that the Indians had taken them into the mountains, and as McCray and Gibson had gone away without their guns, McCray was sent back to get them. McCray reached camp, got the guns and started out to overtake the boys, but soon returned saying he could not find them. The company remained in camp waiting continually for their return and when, late in the afternoon, they had not returned, we began to feel quite uneasy. When night came and they had still not returned, we piled sage brush on our camp fire and kept it burning very bright to light them in. No one in the camp slept and as the hours passed, uneasiness increased. Finally, late in the night they came in, all safe, but very tired and without the cattle, and gave us the following account of their experience.

They had followed the tracks of the cattle through the sand fifteen miles and traced them into a steep,

rough gorge or canyon that opened into the valley from the mountain. They entered this gorge with great caution and had not gone far when they found the carcasses of the cattle warm and bleeding, but no Indians in sight. They were convinced that Indians could not be far away, and momentarily expected an attack from ambush. The Indians had evidently posted a watch on some high point on the mountain, who, when the men were seen approaching, gave the alarm, upon which the cattle were immediately killed and the Indians fled to cover.

It was then nearly night. The horses were poor and weak, and neither the horses nor the men had tasted food or water throughout the day, and there was no relief except in camp. Delay was useless, so they turned immediately and started back. After reaching the plain they noticed far out in the distance a cloud of dust on the horizon and supposed at first it was a small whirlwind, as whirlwinds were very common on those sandy deserts. The dust continued to rise and apparently to approach toward them, and in a little while they were able to make out objects moving through it. They then knew that the Indians, having been warned of their approach and having seen them enter the canyon, had made a wide circle to the rear, and that their purpose was to cut them off from camp. Only a few minutes were required to reveal the fact that the Indians, about thirty in number, were coming toward them as fast as their ponies could gallop, and a brief counsel of war was held. To attempt to out-run them on the poor jaded horses was out of the question, and the situation looked rather desperate. Their lack of guns and ammunition and their inferior numbers made the result of a fight very doubtful. They had no choice but to make the best of it, and the

only thing in their favor was the well known cowardice of the Indians in an open face to face fight. Each of the Gilmores had a double barrel shot gun and Gibson had his bowie knife and these were the weapons with which the fight had to be made. The boys dismounted and as the Indians came within easy view of them they stepped out in front of their horses and waited. The men with the guns held them in position to fire and Gibson drew his bowie knife and held it steadily in his hand. The Indians came on furiously, screaming and yelling, but the boys did not stir a step. The plan was to let them come and get as many of them as possible with the four loads that were in the guns, then with the knife and the guns as clubs, fight it out.

The boys said that for two or three minutes there was every indication that the Indians really meant to fight. They showed no disposition to halt, but came yelling and dashing forward until they were almost in range of the guns. Even though the boys were not equal to the task they had to keep their nerve. If they had shown the least disposition to waver or to change positions the Indians would have been encouraged to come upon them. They stood as firm and steady as though they were made of stone. Not a word was spoken, except that Bob Gilmore quietly counselled the boys to stand perfectly still. This attitude was too much for the Indians. They became convinced that they really had a fight on their hands, and when within seventy-five yards they came to a sudden halt and all danger was past. The bluff had worked and the Indians were going to pretend they never had any hostile intentions. The boys continued to stand perfectly firm and wait. After a moment or two, three or four Indians came forward bowing, making every

demonstration of friendship, saying, "How, How," and asking for tobacco. Gibson in return bowed to them and said "How, How." He also indicated they could have tobacco if they would approach, but the Gilmores kept their guns steadily raised in the same position. When within twenty or thirty feet, the Indians stopped and Gibson approached a little nearer to them and put on an appearance of great friendship. He had no tobacco, but the Gilmores had, so Gibson went back for it, the others remaining in position to fire, and took it from their pockets. The Indians then bowed and the boys bowed and the Indians turned and went back to their companions. The four emissaries who had come out for the tobacco mounted their ponies and the whole thirty of them rode away. The boys kept their positions until the Indians were far out on the plain. They could see them as they rode away, turn on their ponies and watch them, and they proposed to give them to understand that there was a fight ready for them if they desired it, and thus probably prevent an attack farther on in their journey to camp and after night.

When the Indians were well out of the way, the party journeyed on. It was then nearly sundown and fifteen miles to camp. The boys had taken note of the natural objects along the road out, and before it grew entirely dark they located these objects with reference to certain stars that would lead them after night, and in this way managed to get along until they came to where they could see the reflection of the burning sage brush upon the sky. We were greatly rejoiced to see them, and even though they did not bring the cattle back, we felt after our hours of anxiety that the loss of the cattle was but a trivial matter.

A few days' drive after our encounter with the Indians brought us to Big Meadow, a name given to a sort of oasis which was covered with abundant grass and where our cattle could get the finest water. We took a good rest here and it was a delight to see the cattle and horses, after their long drive over the sand and through the sage brush, wade belly deep in the finest of grass. During our stay at this place we cut and cured a large quantity of hay and loaded it on our wagons. We had heard that there was a desert ahead and wanted to be prepared for it. We must have spent four or five days at this place, and when we set forward both men and cattle were much refreshed. A day's journey, as I remember, brought us to the lower end of Humboldt Lake, where, so far as we could see, Humboldt River stopped, that is the river ran into this lake and there was apparently no outlet. We could see a barren country ahead, and rightly judged that we were approaching the desert we had heard of.

Next morning everything was prepared for a long drive without grazing or water. We left early and all day long traveled over a hot, dry plain without once finding a drop of water, and where there was no vegetation upon which our cattle could feed. When night came a conference was held. To attempt to camp in that arid place without food or water would weaken our stock and exhaust our men, so we decided not to camp at all. Accordingly the weary oxen and horses were pushed on at increased speed. We traveled all night long and when daylight came there was still no prospect of relief. To stop, however, was more likely to bring disaster than to go on, so we kept moving. About noon we began to see some evidences of a change. Off in the distance we thought we could see

that the land had a green appearance, and this raised our hopes. On nearer approach we found that our first impressions were correct and that we were really approaching food and water. In a little while we came to a prong of what I learned afterwards was Carson River, which came down from the mountains and ran in an opposite direction from the Humboldt River. The water was clear and had hardly a tinge of alkali in it. When our cattle and horses saw the water, we could not hold them and we did not try very much, for we were almost as nearly famished as they. We took the yokes off of them and let them go. They ran pell-mell down to the water and plunged into it. The men did scarcely better. Many of them jumped right into the water with their clothes on and drank and splashed by turns until they had slaked their thirst and relieved their parched throats. As soon as food could be prepared, and eaten, everybody went to sleep except those who were detailed to stand guard the first two hours. We remained there, the guard being relieved every two hours, until the following morning, when both men and cattle were sufficiently refreshed to proceed.

Thenceforward our journey led us up Carson River. This was not a hard journey. The grass was fine and the water clear. There was no occasion for hurry. It was then growing toward the end of July and the worst of our journey was over.

We moved only fifteen or twenty miles a day and allowed our cattle and horses to browse along and fill themselves as they went. Nearly a hundred miles up the river we came to Carson Valley, where Carson City is now situated. As I recall my whole journey, I can think of no place that so impressed me with its beauty. Six miles across this valley, we came to

the mouth of Carson River Canyon where the river flows out of the mountain. Six miles farther on and after crossing the river a dozen times or more, we passed out of the canyon and found ourselves at the foot of what we named "The Two-Mile Mountain." This mountain had to be climbed. It was so steep that ten yoke of oxen were required to draw each wagon up. This made slow work, as some of the wagons had to be left at the bottom and the oxen brought back to get them. After reaching the top, we journeyed on and came to Red Lake. This was a beautiful body of water. I am not sure whether it is what is now called Lake Tahoe or not, though I feel sure it is. After passing beyond this lake, we came to the "Six-Mile Mountain." This was not so steep as the "Two-Mile Mountain," but it was a much longer pull. As we approached the top we came to snow. This was the 5th day of August, 1849. Before we reached the very crest of the range our oxen had to pass over great drifts of frozen snow which, for all we knew, may have been hundreds of feet deep. At the top of the mountain we were on the crest of the Sierra Nevada Range, and it was a great relief to start down hill. One of the men went forward and picked out a route and twelve miles down the mountain we came to Rock Creek. Beyond this we encountered a descent which was almost as abrupt as our descent into Bear River Valley, but in the present place, we had plenty of timber, so we cut large trees and tied them by chains to the rear of the wagons and allowed them to drag behind. This put a very effective brake upon the wagons and enabled them to go down safely.

I remember an occurrence which took place shortly before we made this descent. Our road led along the edge of a steep declivity which seemed to be a thousand

feet above the valley below. Mitch Hulett and I found it great sport to roll rocks off this precipice and watch them bound away down along the mountain-side. Sometimes we would pry a rock loose that would weigh two or three tons and watch it plunge down, tearing through the timber with frightful noise, scaring grouse, pheasants and wild animals out of the brush in great numbers. Some of the huge rocks would occasionally strike a jutting portion of the mountain and bound a hundred yards downward without striking a single obstruction. We had not noticed the lapse of time and the train got far ahead of us. By and by, we heard a great noise to the rear and in another moment a band of Indians dashed around a curve in the road and were right upon us. There was nothing we could do but run. The road ahead was down hill, and I have always thought we made a pretty good job of it. We broke away at full speed, never stopping to look back, and expecting every moment to feel the arrows in our backs or to see or hear them whiz past us. Every step gave us hope, and after a long run and when completely exhausted, we ventured to halt and look and listen, we discovered that we were not being followed at all. The Indians must have been greatly amused at our fright, but we were still unwilling to take chances and made the best haste we could to overtake the wagons. It required more than two hours, so rapidly had the time passed in our sport. That was the last time our pranks ever induced us to let the teams get so far ahead.

A place which afterwards came to be called Leake Springs is the next point I remember. We camped there for the night and on subsequent journeys I grew familiar with it. Twenty miles beyond this we came to Grass Valley and emerged from the high mountains. Fifteen miles farther we came to Weaver

Creek, August 12th, 1849, where we first saw the gold glitter.

We thought our train was first over the trail, but somehow a few had beaten us in. When we got down to Weaver Creek, three emigrants were at work panning out the gold. We stopped and camped and watched them for a long time. That night I was taken sick with the flux. It was a bad place to be sick and I was dreadfully sick, too. They fixed me sort of a pallet under the shade of a big tree, and I lay there night and day for a week and they didn't know whether I would live or die. Trains were constantly arriving and in one of them there was a doctor. He came down to see me and told the boys they must hunt up a cow and give me fresh warm milk. They told me afterwards they found a train in which somebody had foresight enough to bring a cow along, and they got the milk and brought it to me. I drank it and soon recovered.

CHAPTER III.

Gold Mining in '49 *and* '50.

At last we were in California. I had a rather bitter introduction, but I soon felt well again and began to look about to see what California was really like and to learn the truth of all the wonderful stories I had heard about gold. We didn't want to take up claims immediately—wanted to look about and get the best location possible. They told us about Sacramento City being down the river and we decided to go down there. Weaver Creek was a small tributary of the American River, so we went down to the main stream and moved on down in the direction of Sacramento City. We met a man who said he had just been down there. We asked him how far it was, and he said forty miles. Said it was at the mouth of the American River, that is, where the American River flowed into the Sacramento River. In two days we reached the mouth of the river, but we didn't see any city. I saw a few tents, and there was an old sail boat anchored on Sacramento River up close to the bank, but that was all. I asked a man where Sacramento City was. He said, "This is the place."

We didn't expect to find much of a city, but were hardly prepared for what we found. We stretched our tent, turned our cattle out to graze and prepared for a rest. It was a delightful place. I never saw finer grass nor finer water, and we still had plenty to eat. Toward the close of the day I went down to where the sail boat was being unloaded. Four or five men were carrying provisions—flour, bacon, pickled pork, sugar, coffee, rice—in fact everything substantial to eat, out of the

boat and throwing it upon the bank among the grape vines. I saw no owner. There were no police and nobody seemed to be afraid of thieves. They were not afraid either of rain, for none could be expected at that season of the year. Nor was there even any dew. Everything seemed to be safe both day and night.

Our lean old cattle fattened fast and in a little while we could hardly recognize them. It was a joy to see them eat and drink and rest after the hardships they had endured. The poor things had suffered even more than the men.

About the first of September we started back to the mines. Twenty miles up the American River we each took up a claim and went to work. Everything was placer mining. Each man had his pan and with it and the water of the river, he washed the gravel away from the loose gold. We worked there several weeks and so far as we could see, exhausted the gold that was in our claims. We found on estimating the result of our work that each man had averaged about sixteen dollars a day for every day he had worked.

About the time our claims were exhausted, we were surprised to meet Russell Hill, a cousin of mine, who had worked his way down from Oregon to Sacramento by way of Shasta City, and learning at Sacramento that we were up the American River, had come on up to see us. He had left his home in Iowa the year before and had gone to Oregon. He told us he had stopped a few days at Shasta City and believed it to be a better mining place than the American River, and urged us to go there. Accordingly we yoked up our oxen and packed our belongings into the wagons again and started. When we reached Sacramento City this time, it was not necessary to ask where the city was. The whole valley was covered with tents and lunch stands.

There must have been several thousand people there. They had come in from everywhere, off the plains by caravan, up the river from San Francisco by boat, and from every other place in the world, it seemed to me. There were as yet no houses. People, men mostly, lived in tents and the lunch counters consisted of the sideboards of the wagons laid upon poles supported by forks driven in the ground. Meals were a uniform price, $1.00, but lodging was free. Just spread your blanket down on the grass anywhere and make yourself at home.

Shasta City is two hundred miles up Sacramento River and a little northwest of Sacramento City. Knight's Landing, near the mouth of Feather River, was our first stop of any consequence. We went up Feather River to where Marysville now stands and thence in a northwesterly direction back into the Sacramento Valley. This valley is about an average of twenty-five miles in width and at that time there were no towns or even camps upon it and consequently I can give little account of our progress. I only recall that about every twenty miles we came upon a ranch occupied by a few families of Spaniards. These Spaniards had made slaves of the Digger Indians who lived in mounds or huts covered with earth. The Indians raised wheat and gathered it in cane baskets. They then rubbed the wheat out of the straw and beat it into flour. These Indians went almost naked and lived, themselves, on salmon, acorns, grapes and grasshoppers. They were the most disgusting mortals I have ever seen in my life. When we passed the huts or mounds in which they lived, the pappooses would dart back into them exactly like prairie dogs. I asked an old Spaniard why he kept these filthy Indians around him, and he said they protected him from the wild Indians.

The whole valley was covered by abundant vegetation and was full of wild herds of Spanish horses and thousands of wild Spanish cattle. It was also full of many savage wild animals, grizzly, brown and black bear, California lions, panthers, wolves, wild cats and badgers. There was an abundance also of elk, deer and antelope, and we never lacked for fresh venison.

We reached Shasta late in September, and like Sacramento City, found everything but the city. One or two log cabins and a few tents made up the sum of all the improvements. We put in a few days looking over the situation and viewing prospects for getting gold and decided to spend the winter there. This made it necessary for us to look immediately into our stock of provisions, and upon going through it we found that we had hardly enough to last us. Nothing could be done but go back to Sacramento and secure an additional supply, and brother William and a man by the name of Gleason, from Iowa, who had made the trip with us up the river, started back with one wagon and four yoke of oxen. We stretched our tent and stored all the provisions we had in it in such a way as to protect them, and brother William and Gleason bade us good by.

This trip meant four hundred miles more of hardship and danger, and we hated very much to see them leave, but nothing else could be done. The boys made the trip down without trouble, so they reported upon their return, but on the way back the rainy season set in and swelled the rivers so that they were past fording much of the time. The trip ought to have been made easily in twenty-five or thirty days, but it occupied from the latter part of September until Christmas.

Hard as this trip was upon the two who made it, their sufferings were hardly to be compared to the

condition of brother James and myself. We had but a small tent in which to shelter both ourselves and our provisions and such meagre equipment as we had hauled across the plains. We had been alone but a few days when brother James was taken down with the scurvy. About the 10th of October the rain set in and continued almost in a steady downpour for about three weeks. Everything was completely soaked. It was next to impossible to find fuel enough to start a fire. I had to take care of brother James and keep changing the provisions to prevent them from spoiling, had to dry the blankets and clothing three or four times a day. In all, I don't think I averaged more than two hours sleep out of the whole twenty-four during this period of continued rain. I battled along the best I could, and at the end of about three weeks it ceased to rain so hard.

I shall never forget two friends who came to my rescue at this time—Charles Laffoon and Mike Cody. Both were from St. Louis and had run a dray on the wharf on the Mississippi River, they said. They had reached Shasta a few months ahead of us and had built a log cabin. On one side of this they attached a shed which they used for a cook room and the whole made a very comfortable dwelling. Lately, however, a great many people had arrived and they had arranged a bar at one end of the main cabin and fixed up some tables at the other for a poker game. Both of these enterprises proved good money makers and they were getting along fine. After it had been raining three or four weeks, Mike came up to our tent one morning. He saw the trouble we were in and said we must not stay there. I told him I knew nothing else to do. He said he would arrange that all right; that he would make room for us in his cabin. He didn't even

wait for an answer, but set to work packing things up. In a little while everything we had was moved under a roof. He fixed a bunk in the shed or cook room for my brother and brought some men up and carried him down and laid him on it. We used our own blankets of course, and I cooked our meals, but Mike and his partner took care of the rest of it. Everything was very quiet in the day time when the men were out working in the diggings, but at night things were mighty lively —drinking, gambling and fighting. We didn't mind all this, for it was so much better than the leaky old tent we had put up with for so long, and no kinder men ever lived than Mike Cody and Charles Laffoon.

Brother William and Gleason got back on Christmas day, worn out themselves and their teams in worse condition. It was still raining. They had had a dreadful time, high water, mud, rain and no shelter. They had to expose themselves in order to keep the provisions dry.

A cabin, some distance away from the cluster of houses which was called the town, had been vacated, and we moved in, though I think Cody and Laffoon would have arranged in some way to accommodate all of us in their cabin had they thought we could do no better. The cabin was fairly comfortable. It had a good fire-place and a good roof, and these were the principal necessities. The weather was not very cold, but everything was so entirely saturated that fire was even more necessary than if the weather had been cold. We had room in the cabin for our cots and provisions, and we settled down about the first of January to spend the winter. We drove the cattle ten miles down the river to Redding's Ranch and turned them loose in his wild herd to graze until spring. About the middle of January, William took

the scurvy. James had improved very little, so I now had both of them on my hands. They both lay there unable to walk a step for three months. There was but little that could be done for them, but I had a great deal on my hands doing even that and was thankful that I had been spared from the disease myself, for if I had taken down we should all have been cast upon the generosity of the wild, rough men who made up that camp. I had no fear, however, but what we would be taken care of. During the latter part of the winter, I was taken with a light attack of the same disease. I was very much afraid it would become serious, but I did not get down. I could walk flat footed on my left foot, but had to tip-toe on my right, and all through the balance of the winter I did the cooking, provided the wood, and ran the errands, hobbling along the best I could.

Besides this, we were somewhat troubled by finances. Everything was going out and nothing coming in. Everybody at work making plenty of money, but we were compelled to stay in this cabin and spend what we had made. We were rich, however, in provisions. Had enough to last us a year and they were worth more than gold. I remember that flour was worth two hundred dollars a sack, and most everything else was in proportion.

Late in March a doctor drifted into camp. He heard that we had sickness up at our cabin and came up. He looked my brothers over. He had no medicine and there was very little, if any, in the camp. He prescribed raw Irish potatoes sliced in vinegar. We had no potatoes. I went down to see if I could find them in camp. I hunted the place over and could not find any. I was going home discouraged when I met Mike Cody. I told him what I had been doing and he said

if there was a potato in California, he would get it for me. Next morning a man brought a bushel up to our cabin and told us that was all the potatoes in that part of the country. I asked him what he wanted for them and he said they were paid for. When I asked him who paid him he said it was Mike Cody. I then asked what he got for them. He said seventy-five dollars. I took the potatoes and fixed them up as the doctor had told me and gave them to the boys. In a few days they began to mend and in two or three weeks were able to hobble about the cabin, and by the first of May they were well enough to take care of themselves nicely. I hadn't forgotten Mike Cody in the meantime. I went down one day and told Mike I wanted to settle for the potatoes and for the use of his cabin the early part of the winter. He said "You don't owe me anything for staying at the cabin and the potatoes were a present." Said if he could do anything else, just let him know. I thanked him the best I could, but he told me that he didn't want any thanks, and that I must not feel under obligation to him. He reminded me that on several occasions when he wanted to go out in town and have a good time, I had kept his bar and run his poker game for him, and said that paid for everything he had done for us. I knew that was only an excuse to keep me from feeling so much in debt to him, but I let it go at that and never lost an opportunity to show that I appreciated what he had done.

I ought to mention, probably, my experiences as a bar-keeper and manager of a poker game on the few occasions when I was called upon to assume those responsible positions. The bar was a broad plank which rested upon supports and extended clear across one end of the cabin. The bottles of whiskey and bowls

of gold dust were kept on this plank. Mike sold nothing and had nothing to sell but whiskey. When a man wanted a drink he would hand me over his sack of gold dust. I poured out the price of a drink in the scale pan and put it over in the bowl. I then gave him his drink and handed him back his bag of gold dust. The poker game was not very hard to manage. The players had their rules and kept their guns close by to enforce them. This made everybody very cautious about observing the rules and seeing that a fair game was played. As long as the fellows remained sober I never saw any trouble over these games. Sometimes a fellow would get drunk and try to start trouble and he usually succeeded. We generally saved the lives of such fellows by taking them immediately away and putting them to bed.

About the 1st of May, Gleason, who had remained at the camp all winter, and I rigged up a couple of pack mules and went over to Trinity River, thirty miles west. There we found quite a prosperous camp where they were getting a good deal of gold. We each took up a claim and went to work, and got quite a quantity of gold. About the 1st of June, James and William, who by that time were able to ride horseback, came over and they each took a claim. By the 1st of August we had worked these claims pretty well out and decided to go on to Salmon River, forty miles farther west. While we were at Trinity River, Alfred Jack of near Camden Point, Platte County, came in and joined us. He decided to go on with us to Salmon River and we all packed up and started. The trip was without incident, except that over toward the end of our journey we came to an Indian village. We rode in toward the village and as we approached we saw the bucks all running away as fast as they could, leaving

their squaws and pappooses behind. This was strange behavior and we wondered what it meant. When we got up to the village, we found a white horse which they had just shot full of arrows. This looked a little dangerous to us. We didn't know the meaning of this conduct and took it to be a sign of war. We passed on through the village, hurried after the Indians and soon overtook them. We had our guns and plenty of ammunition and were pretty well prepared for a fight with them, as against their bows and arrows, though they greatly outnumbered us. When they saw we were prepared for them and knowing as they did that we had not harmed their squaws and pappooses, they came and told us that they had run away because their dogs had run at sight of us. They didn't explain why they had shot the horse full of arrows, but I have always been of the opinion they intended to waylay and kill us if they could.

We reached Salmon River late in the afternoon and camped for the night. Next morning we took our picks, shovels and pans and went out to look for gold and found it. By noon when we gathered back at the camp every man was satisfied to make permanent camp and remain a while. We were the first in this immediate section of the country. Other parties were farther up the river and still others farther down the river, but we found no evidences at all that any white men had ever been in this particular place. We seemed to have a way of getting in ahead. We were in the lead across the plains, among the first to reach Sacramento, about the first at Shasta City, and Trinity River, and actually the first on Salmon River. We were not there long, however, until others began to come in, and in a short time all the available locations for placer mining were taken. We remained some six weeks, as

I recollect, on Salmon River and panned out quite a quantity of gold; enough to pay us well for the trip but hardly as much as we anticipated we would get when we left home, after hearing the reports that came to us. Still we were satisfied and now that we all had good health, had no complaint to make. Some one who came into our camp on Salmon River brought the word that our brothers were coming across the plains from Missouri, and would get in sometime in September. We decided to go back and meet them, so we broke camp and went back to Shasta City. Here we loaded our plunder into our own wagons which had been left during our absence, and after procuring our cattle from Redding's Ranch—so fat and sleek we could hardly recognize them, we set out down Sacramento River. The trip was made without incident. It was the dry season of the year. There was plenty of game, plenty for the cattle to eat, and no trouble about fording the river. While we were in camp one night at Knight's Landing, I put a sack of dried beef which we called "jerky," under the back part of my pillow to make sure the coyotes would not get it. In this I was mistaken, for sometime that night a coyote came up and helped himself and we had no jerky for breakfast. My slumbers were not disturbed in the least by the burglar.

A little farther down the Sacramento River, while in camp one night, we were all awakened by an unusual noise. The camp fire was burning dimly and afforded enough light for us to see, not twenty yards away, a huge grizzly bear. He was sniffing around picking up scraps of meat and bone which we had thrown away. There was a good deal of quiet excitement in the camp over the discovery of this guest, but fortunately everybody had sense enough to keep still.

The old fellow prowled about the camp for a long time. Sometimes he would get right up by the fire and then we had a good look at him. He paid no attention to us at all. Apparently didn't know we were in the neighborhood. At least if he knew it, he didn't let on. By and by, after satisfying himself that there were no more scraps, he walked slowly away and we could hear him rattling the bushes and crushing the dead limbs and sticks that lay upon the ground for a long distance. It was not until he had been out of hearing for quite a long time that anybody dared to speak, and then our first words to each other were of congratulation. We hadn't had very much experience with grizzly bears at that time and didn't know but what the old fellow might have attempted to piece out his meal on one of us. We were glad enough when he decided to go and hunt up some more bones and scraps and let us alone.

We reached Sacramento City about September 20th, and from there went up to Salmon Falls on the American River, where we found our brothers, Isaac, Zach and Robert, and quite a company of our Buchanan County acquaintances—Calvin James, Charles Ramsey and his family, Perry Jones, William Glenn, James Glenn, and some others whom I do not at this moment recall. Charles Ramsey's wife was the first white woman I had seen since I left St. Joseph, May 2nd, 1849.

It was a great joy to us to meet these old acquaintances and to feel that we were now not quite so lonely out in that wild country. We all remained in camp at Salmon Falls for several weeks. During this time the boys looked around to see what they had better do. Chas. Ramsey and Calvin James took up a ranch about thirty miles west of Sacramento River on Cash Creek.

The five brothers of us decided that the best thing we could do was to take up a ranch also. We went over into the same neighborhood and squatted on a body of land. There was no law prescribing any amount that each man could take, and the grazing land was held largely in common. We had a good bunch of cattle and horses of our own and emigrants were continually offering their teams for sale. Isaac, Zach and Robert had brought considerable money out with them, and James, William and myself had practically all the gold we had cleaned up in mining, so we were in shape to begin the cattle business on a pretty good scale. By the first of December we had a fine herd of cattle, all branded with our particular brand, grazing on the pasture along Cash Creek.

We built a cabin close to the cabin that James and Ramsey had put up, and staked out our ranch. There were five men in the James cabin and seven in ours—six Gibson brothers and Eli Wilson. The whole valley of Cash Creek as well as much of the valley of Sacramento River, was covered with wild oats. Red clover grew wild and there were many other grasses just as good for cattle.

We had plenty of flour, sugar, coffee and such other common groceries as were to be had in the markets at Sacramento. It had cost quite a sum of money to get these provisions—I do not remember just how much, but it was fabulous almost, and the only consolation we got was out of the fact that we didn't have to buy meat. We had our own cattle if we wanted beef, but there was no need even for that when venison was so plentiful.

It must have been sometime during the first of December that we organized a hunt for the purpose of laying in a good supply of meat for the winter. We

rigged up ten pack mules, went to the mountains a few miles distant and camped. From this camp we conducted our hunting expedition and in a few days had more than enough venison to last through the winter. We killed elk, deer and antelope enough to load our train. Part of this we took down to Sacramento and traded it for other provisions. We felt that we could get meat any time when we had to have it, but might not be able to get other provisions, and that an extra supply would make us feel more comfortable.

The grazing was fine all through the winter. The climate, as every one knows, is not cold and the one discomfort was the continued rain, but this had its compensations. When the rivers and sloughs filled up with water, the wild ducks and wild geese came in to feed upon the wild oats. We had little to do but look after our cattle and think about what we would like to eat. If we decided in the morning to have duck or goose, some one took the gun, went out and brought back just what we had decided upon. The rivers were full of the finest fish and they were no trouble to catch at all, so when we wanted fish, it was at hand. I have never lived at any place in my life where I felt so sure of provisions as in that cabin during that winter. We had four large greyhounds that had come across the plains with some of the emigrants and we picked them up as company We trained them to hunt bear—that is the bear soon trained them. It was no trouble to get them to trail bear. They seemed to do this by instinct, but seemed not always to be sure of the kind of animal they were after. I judged this by watching them tackle the bear after they had overtaken it. They would dash in with as much confidence as if he were a jack rabbit or a coyote and showed plainly that they proposed to take him in

and annihilate him at once. They would also show a good deal of surprise when the old bear would rise up on his hind feet and box them ten feet away. They soon learned to keep their distance and play with the bear, keeping him standing on his hind feet, watching them until we could come up close enough to get a shot. That always ended it. Sometimes the bear would take to a tree. In either case we always got him. These dogs were great company for us. If we happened not to want any bear meat, we would take the dogs and chase jack-rabbits and coyotes. They were pretty swift dogs, but it was seldom that they could pick up a jack-rabbit, and rarely ever got a coyote on a straight run, but we had as much fun and more probably than if the dogs had been able to pick them up right along.

Thus passed the winter of '50 and '51—as pleasant a period as I recall during my whole life. By the spring and early summer of '51 our cattle were fat and fine and ready to be sold for beef. We peddled them out to the butchers and miners along the Sacramento and American Rivers. They brought us an average of one hundred and fifty dollars a head. By the first of July they were all gone and we began to look for emigrants' cattle to re-stock the ranch. We supposed that emigration across the plains would continue and in order to get first chance at cattle that might be for sale, we loaded up our pack mules, crossed the Sierra Nevada Mountains, and went down Carson River to Humboldt Desert. We were greatly surprised to find only a few straggling emigrant trains coming in and most of these were bent on settlement rather than mining and had brought their families. Of course, they had no cattle to sell. We waited until the latter part of July, and when we became convinced that no cattle were coming we had to determine the next best thing to do.

The grazing of cattle had proved so much more to our liking than digging gold that we wanted to continue in that business, but we couldn't do it without cattle. We thought about the thousands of cattle back in Missouri that might be had for ten or fifteen dollars a head, and decided to return across the plains and during the winter gather up a herd and take it back the following summer. This plan seemed to suit best. Brother William was not in the best of health and didn't feel equal to the task of crossing the plains, so it was agreed that he and Eli Wilson would stay with the ranch and take care of things during the year and that the rest of us would go back.

CHAPTER IV.

Back Across the Plains.

It was now close to the first of August, 1851. We were camped at the western side of the fifty-mile desert which gave us so much trouble on our way over. We had packed provisions and equipment sufficient only to take us across the Sierra Nevada Mountains and back. We always allowed for emergency and put in plenty. The question now was whether we were well enough equipped to start on a long journey back across the plains. We made an inventory of our stock of provisions and supplies, and decided that we could make it. Brother William and Wilson took only a small quantity of supplies with them on their return journey. They were going into a country where plenty was to be found, and if they ran low, it would make no great difference. With us it was different. We had no assurances that we could get supplies of any kind at any point on the journey, at least not until we reached the outposts near St. Joseph.

As already related, we had carried our supplies from home on pack mules. We had no wagons or oxen with us and had to arrange to make the entire journey carrying our provisions and camp equipment on the mules.

After getting everything ready we bade goodby to brother William and Wilson, and started early in the morning. We entered at once upon the fifty-mile desert and traveled that day and all the following night. Our mules made better progress than the ox teams, and we reached the Carson Sink a little after daylight where we found water. We also fell in with

four men who said they had started to Salt Lake, but had heard from the passing emigrants that the Indians were on the war path ahead and were afraid to go any farther alone and were waiting for company. We had heard the same story, so concluded their excuse for being there was a good one and that they had no designs upon unwary emigrants. We sized them all up and decided to take them into our company. Three of them were brothers whose names were Kilgore. The fourth was a German whose name I have forgotten. They all lived in Iowa. They seemed very much frightened at the idea of going on, and suggested that we wait for further reinforcements. We told them we had no time to waste and that we were going on and they could join us if they wanted to. They finally consented, rigged up their outfit and made ready. We traveled up the Humboldt River over the old road until we reached the head waters of that stream. There were three roads open to us from this point. One to Fort Hall on Snake River, a middle road which had been blazed since we came over, called Hedgepath's cut-off, and the South road to Salt Lake. We took the Salt Lake road, though it was new to all of us. We struck Bear River, about one hundred and fifty miles from Salt Lake, crossed it and traveled down the East side to Weaverville and then on to Ogden. Here we rested a few days and had our mules and horses shod.

The day after we camped, Brigham Young paid us a visit. He asked us many questions, but we gave him little satisfaction. We had ten thousand dollars in gold with us and hadn't any confidence in the Mormons, so we kept close watch. A day or two after this, we took our mules and started to Salt Lake City. About twenty miles out on our journey we met a large ve-

hicle drawn by eight big white horses, a driver on top, and a great many women and one man inside. I recognized the man as Brigham Young, but said nothing. A little farther on we overtook a man in the road and I asked him who the man and all the women were that we had met back on the road. He said it was Brigham Young and twenty of his wives.

We made a short stop at Salt Lake. There seemed to be but one road out of the valley in which the city is situated and that led us south about ten miles, thence east through a steep, rough canyon. It was at the mouth of that canyon where the Mormons later built the wall to resist the government soldiers. The road through the canyon led us finally to the top of a high range of mountains. Passing over this and down the eastern slope, we came to Ft. Bridger on Black Fork of Green River. We followed this stream down to the main prong of Black River and went thence northeasterly to Green River, thence up a prong of that river until we reached the divide at South Pass. Here, after four hundred miles over a strange road and over wild and rugged mountains and deserts, we came again to the Oregon Trail, and found a familiar road.

This portion of the road is now familiar also to the reader. It led down Sweetwater, past Independence Rock and Devil's Gate to North Platte River. Just after we crossed the North Platte, we stopped for dinner. We had eaten our meal and were resting when we saw what appeared to be a band of Indian ponies back across the river and about a mile away. We could not tell whether Indians were upon the ponies or not, but there was little doubt in our minds but that there were. We packed our mules hurriedly, saddled our horses, and started on and had made but a short distance when three Indians came running up in our rear

on foot. They had dodged out from behind a boulder somewhere along the road. They appeared to be quite friendly. They said "How, How," and pointed to the good grass along the road. By these signs we understood that they wanted us to camp and were recommending the place to us. All this time the ponies were getting closer to us and all doubt that Indians were upon them was removed. When the three saw that we were not going to stop, one of them grabbed the bit of the horse ridden by one of the Kilgore boys and attempted to hold it. Kilgore threw his gun down at the Indian, who loosed his hold and ran back. One of the three during this performance dropped behind and raised a sort of flag. At this the whole band of ponies started towards us and every pony had a red-skin on his back lying close down to the pony's neck. They came galloping as fast as the ponies could carry them and in single file. As they came closer we saw that they were all painted up in war style with black feathers plaited in their hair. There must have been twenty-five or thirty of them, and there were nine of us—five Gibsons, three Kilgores, and the Dutchman. This Dutchman rode in a little cart while the rest of us were on horse-back. We had eight pack mules loaded with our camp equipment and provision, and they had to be taken care of.

We put the pack mules abreast and pushed them directly ahead of us. The first Indians to reach us appeared to be very friendly, as if they could deceive anybody by that old ruse. They said "How, How," and appeared to be very anxious for our welfare. Their purpose in this, it was plain enough to see, was to allow their companions all to come up. When the last of their party caught up they all set up a great yell

and made a dash to get between us and our pack mules. Every man in our company drew his navy and each man pointed at a different Indian. We had the drop on them. They had not drawn the guns which some of them had or the bows and arrows which others carried, and the first attempt to draw a weapon meant a dead Indian and they knew it, so they halted and fell back. As soon as they were out of the way we moved up and formed a ring around the pack mules, facing outward. This seemed to please them wonderfully, for they started galloping around us, yelling and going through all manner of ferocious maneuvers, but apparently never getting in a position where they could draw a weapon. As soon as we had surrounded our mules, Zach and Robert slipped off their horses and coupled all the mules together. This would keep them from scattering out. In a moment the boys were back in their saddles and back in the ring facing outward. The Dutchman in his cart was outside of our ring. He was very much agitated for a time for fear he would get cut off from us and be taken by the Indians. He managed to dash in, however, and get right close to our line and stop his horse. This gave him a chance to get out his double barrel shot gun which he carried in the cart and get ready for action.

This milling and yelling, around and around, must have kept up for ten or fifteen minutes. We didn't want to kill any of them, but we didn't propose they should get any advantage of us, and every man was on guard. By and by, Robert and Zach, who faced the road ahead, put spurs to their horses and broke through the ring, Robert turning on the Indians to the right and Zach to the left, each with a navy in each hand and the bridle reins in his mouth. This caused the Indians to break up the milling and hurry to the

rear in order to keep their forces together. At the moment when they started back, two of our men put whip to the mules and forced them out through the gap as fast as they could gallop. The rest of us stood firm and steady, holding our guns on the Indians. We held them in this manner until the mules were well out of the way, then turned and galloped after them. We knew all the time that we had the Indians bluffed. They couldn't get any advantage of us and they would not fight in the open. They stood completely still after we left them and continued to watch us as long as we were in sight.

We made good haste that afternoon and traveled late. By 6:00 o'clock we were twenty-five miles away, and after supper we pressed forward until midnight. We counted that this put us a safe distance away, but to make still more certain of our position, we rode off from the trail about a mile to camp. At daylight we were moving again and the next day at noon reached Ft. Laramie. Perhaps this haste and forced marching were all unnecessary, but in dealing with the Indians, it is a good idea to put just as much distance as you can between yourself and them. Ft. Laramie offered us the first real security we had known since we crossed the Continental Divide. The whole territory, especially between Platte River and Ft. Laramie, was infested with the worst bands of Indians then known to emigrants, and many trains had been robbed and the members killed on this portion of the journey.

We found sixty thousand Indians at Ft. Laramie to draw their pay from the government. All were camped across the river north of the Fort. As we left Ft. Laramie we rode over and stopped for our mid-day meal. They gathered around us, made signs, tried to

swap ponies with us and pretended to be, and were in fact at that time, very friendly with us. I remember an amusing incident that occurred at this time. Brother Isaac had a little Spanish mule which he offered to the Indians for a pony. The Indians asked if the mule was gentle. Isaac told them it was perfectly so, and in order to prove it, he jumped upon the mule bareback and with nothing but a halter to control it by. The mule had carried a pack all the way from Sacramento, but this was a new experience. He immediately bowed his back, stuck his head down between his knees, and began bucking. In a twinkle, Isaac was rolling ten feet away in the sand. I never saw anything give as much delight as this gave the Indians. They whooped and yelled and kept it up. Now and then it would subside and then break out again. We joined the Indians and laughed as heartily as they; everybody enjoyed it but brother Isaac. It was like most funny things, no fun at all to somebody.

About 2:00 o'clock we started down North Platte. The soldiers warned us to look out for scouting parties of Indians, and our own experience told us this was good advice. We met with no trouble, however, and reached the mouth of South Platte in good time. On this ride from Ft. Laramie to South Platte I think we must have seen hundreds of thousands of buffalo. They were so tame they would hardly give us the road. We had all the good buffalo beef we wanted every meal. A while before camping time, one of our party would ride ahead, pick out a good place where water and fuel could be had. He would then ride out to the closest buffalo herd, pick out a fat yearling, shoot it, and have it ready when we came up. It was short work to make a fire, make our bread, make the coffee and broil a fine buffalo steak. I have never enjoyed

any meals in my life more than these. There was only one trouble about this method of getting our meat—the wolves kept us awake most of the night fighting over the carcass. In order to avoid this we usually dragged the carcass out of hearing of the camp. On the trip down from Ft. Laramie we noticed one day a great herd of buffalo far in front of us and a little to the right of the trail, which seemed to be grazing on the hillside in a circle. As we came nearer we made out the situation more clearly. Hundreds of them grazing, heads outward, formed a complete circle in which there must have been a thousand little calves all lying down. On the opposite hillside a half mile away, we saw about twenty savage wolves watching the herd. The buffalo were watching also. They knew the wolves were there and they were protecting their calves against them.

When we reached Ft. Kearney we learned that the Indians on Little Blue were on the war path, so kept on down Platte River fifty or sixty miles farther, and then passed across the country where Lincoln now stands, and reached the Missouri River at old Ft. Kearney, where Nebraska City is now situated. We crossed the Missouri River into Iowa and thence down the east side of the river. About the middle of the afternoon one day, we crossed the Missouri line, journeyed on to night, and went into camp without a guard, the first in three months. We passed Jackson's Point and Oregon, in Holt County, and reached Jimtown, Andrew County, where we stopped for the night with Drury Moore, a cousin of ours, and slept in a bed, the first in three years. Next day we reached home.

We rode up, driving our pack mules loaded with blankets, bread pans, frying pans, coffee pots, tin cups, and sacks of provisions; hair and beard long and un-

kempt and tanned as brown as Indians. Mother, sister Mary and brother Isaac's wife were the only members of the family at home and they came out on the portico of the house to watch us. They were not expecting us for two years, and of course, thought the caravan they saw belonged to strangers. When we began climbing off our horses and fastening the pack mules to the fence, they fell back into the house. We hitched, got over the fence, and walked up to the door without being recognized. In fact, we had a real hard time convincing them that we were really ourselves, and I am not very much surprised that they should not have known us. The dirt, sand, wind, sun and the grimy life we had led for more than six weeks without a shave or a hair cut was enough to disguise us.

We reached home about the middle of September, 1851. It was a delightful thing to be at home once more, but in order to carry out our plans we had little time to spare during this season of the year. Prairie hay grew in great quantities on the old farm and it was now in perfect condition to be cut and cured. We rested only a day or two, then sharpened up the scythes and went to work. We cut and cured twenty or thirty tons of this hay in order that we might have something to feed the cattle on as we collected them together. After this was done, we had a good long period of rest. Christmas came and we entered into the fun with the young folks. I think I shall never forget this winter at home.

About the first of January, 1852, we began buying cattle and kept it up throughout the remainder of the winter. By the first of May we had five hundred and fifty head collected upon the old farm ready to start.

CHAPTER V.

Across the Plains With Cattle.

The first days of May found us on the banks of the river at the mouth of Black Snake. Most of the men went along with the first load of cattle ferried across the river. As the cattle were driven out on the farther shore, the men corralled them and held them on a sand-bar to await the slow process of bringing the whole herd across. Elwood bottom at that time was a perfect wilderness of timber with only an Indian trail leading through it out as far as Peter's Creek. After much delay, the last of the herd was ferried over and then came the wagons, oxen, horses and mules.

There were twenty-five men in charge of this drove of cattle. Each man had a horse, and besides this, we had a number of mules. We took three wagon loads of provisions and had four yoke of oxen to each wagon. This comprised the outfit.

The Indians occupied the land on the Kansas side of the river and they came down to see us cross. They were peaceable and harmless, and did not mean to give us any trouble. They would come up close to the trail, and stand and stare at the cattle, and this was about as bad a thing as could have been done. I don't know why it is, but cattle never liked Indians. The whole herd would pass a white man without paying any attention to him, but if an Indian stood by the wayside where the cattle could see him, he would create a great commotion, and frequently, unless the greatest care was observed, a stampede would follow.

The cattle were not used to traveling, and we experienced our greatest trouble the first week out. We had not only the Indians to contend with, but we had to break the cattle to drive, and the brush and timber were so thick that every man in the company had to be on the watch to keep from losing some of the herd. The men were as green as the cattle, and with all these hindrances we made slow progress the first period of our journey. At the end of about a week or ten days, and after we had reached the high prairie, things began to settle down. The men learned their duties and the cattle had apparently been as apt as the men. They understood exactly what was before them when the start was made in the morning. One of our company always rode ahead and it was a pretty sight to see all the cattle break away from grazing and start out after this leader as soon as the men began to crack their whips and call to them.

We made no haste. The grazing was good and the water plentiful, and we wanted our cattle to get in as good condition as possible before they reached the desert part of the journey. Ten or fifteen miles a day was counted a good day's drive. At this rate, there was plenty of time for grazing and rest. The new men with us were impatient to go faster, but those of us who had been over the journey knew too well the trials ahead to permit haste on this part of the road. We wanted to save our strength in order that we might make haste across the mountains and the alkali that lay between us and the end of our journey.

At Little Blue we overtook a train lying in camp, and learned that Cholera had broken out, and that several deaths had occurred. An old man by the name of Frost came out to where we were and said he had been waiting for us; that he had heard we would

be on the road this year, and when misfortune and sickness overtook his train, he decided to wait for us. He lived on Grand River, and his son had died of the Cholera, and we wanted to take the body back home. He said he had enough of the plains and didn't care to spend the remainder of his days amid such hardships. He had forty head of choice dairy cows and asked us to buy them. We told him we had no money for that purpose with us. He said he didn't want the money, if we would give him our note it would be good enough for him. We accordingly gave him a note for six hundred dollars and he turned his little herd over to us.

Brother Isaac decided to return with Mr. Frost and wait until he heard from us, and if we succeeded in getting our cattle through without difficulty, he would bring another herd the next year. Within a week after Isaac left, brother William, who had made the trip home by way of Panama and New York, overtook us with a drove about equal in number to ours. We combined the two and all moved together, thenceforth throughout the journey.

I may anticipate a little here and say that after arriving in California, we sent the money back to take up our note given for the forty cows. It reached our father and he communicated with Mr. Frost, paid him the money and took up the note. It was pretty slow business, but it was accomplished without difficulty.

When the two herds of cattle and two companies of men were joined together, they made quite a caravan. A good many Buchanan County boys made the trip with us, among them were James and Russell Deakins, Joe and Sebastian Kessler, Rufus Huffman and a man by the name of Streeter, who went along as cook in brother William's company. There were many others, but I cannot now recall their names.

We journeyed without incident that I now recall until we reached Plum Creek, which I have described in the account of my first trip out. Close to this place the wolves attacked our cattle one night and caught a fine cow and a heifer, and before we could relieve them tore their flanks so dreadfully that they both died. The bellowing of these two raised the whole herd and came near creating a stampede. It was a very dark night. The entire company got out upon horseback and rounded up the cattle, and kept galloping around them the remainder of the night, firing their guns to frighten away the wolves. It is a wonder we didn't have more trouble with wolves than we did. The buffalo had all gone south and had not returned, and the wolves were savagely hungry and would attack most anything that offered them a chance of securing food.

We kept our course on up the Platte, taking every protection against wolves and Indians, and finally reached a point just below the junction of the two rivers. Here we decided to try a new road. We would not go up the South Platte as we had gone on our previous trip, but would cross the river and follow up the North Platte. We spent half a day sounding the bottom of the river and found we could cross by raising our wagon beds about ten inches. The banks of the stream were low, but the water was running nearly bank full. By the middle of the afternoon we had the wagon beds all raised and the banks spaded down and ready for the start. We hitched ten yoke of cattle to one wagon and drove in with five men on horseback on each side of the cattle to keep them straight. This wagon crossed over in good shape and the oxen were driven back and a second wagon taken across the same way. As the last wagon crossed, we pushed the whole

drove of cattle, a thousand in all, after the wagon. The loose cattle traveled faster than the work cattle and began to bunch behind the wagon and around the oxen until we could not tell the work cattle from the loose ones, except by the yoke. The loose cattle crowded on, more and more of them gathering about the wagon until I began to think our work cattle as well as the wagon were in great danger. We took quick action to relieve the situation. I ordered fifteen or twenty of the boys to rush right in, and with their whips force the loose cattle away from the oxen. They cut and slashed, whooped and yelled, and finally got in alongside the wagon and the work cattle. They then forced the oxen as fast as they could to shore and drove them out safely on the opposite bank. This left the loose cattle without any guide as to their course across the river. The current was running swiftly and the cattle wandered off down the river, sometimes getting beyond their depth and finally when they reached the bank, it was in many places so steep they could not climb out. It was a pretty serious situation for a little while, but by and by through hard work and much racing of the horses, we got them all out on the opposite shore and rounded them up about sundown.

Next morning we started on our slow journey up North Platte and moved on day by day, passed Fort Laramie, and a few miles above it struck across the mountains along the old trail most of us had twice traveled. Scenes were familiar along this route by this time—Fremont's Peak in the distance to the north, Independence Rock and Devil's Gate, and farther on South Pass, which divides the waters of the Atlantic from the Pacific.

Green River was past fording. A couple of men from the east somewhere had constructed their wagon beds

of sheet iron made in the shape of flat boats and had left home ahead of emigration and when they reached this river, unloaded and set their wagon beds on the river and were ready for business. They set our wagons over at five dollars per load, and we swam our horses and cattle after them. We chose the old trail over which we had gone in forty-nine, as better than the Hedgepeth cut-off, and so we passed Soda Springs and Fort Hall, thence down Snake River to mouth of Raft River, up Raft River and over the divide to the Humboldt, down the Humboldt, over the desert and across the Sierra Nevada Range, and down on the other side. Every spot seemed as familiar to me as my father's door yard, but the most vivid recollections came when I passed the old pine tree at Weaver Creek under which I lay sick for ten days in forty-nine.

We crossed Sacramento River on a ferry at Sacramento City and went forty miles southwest into the Suisun Valley, nearer San Francisco Bay than our first ranch. We stopped a few days on Charles Ramsey's ranch until we could locate grazing land of our own. Ramsey was a son-in-law of Calvin James, and, as heretofore related, had brought his family with my brothers on their trip out in 1850. He built a pre-emption house in a black-haw patch where Easton, Missouri, now stands. After his arrival in California in 1850, he took up a ranch in Suisun Valley and passed the remainder of his life there.

After resting a few days at Ramsey's, brother James and I went back east about ten miles to Barker Valley and located a ranch, and returned for our cattle. Our first thought was of the cattle and after they had been provided for, we thought of ourselves. We put up a substantial cabin to shelter us from the rainy season, and then built a large corral by cutting posts

and setting them deep in the ground, and binding the tops together with rawhide. We then dug a deep ditch around it, after which we were sure it would hold a grizzly bear. Our ranch proved to be on land claimed by Barker, a Spaniard, who lived about ten miles away, but he gave us no trouble. He had a little village of Spaniards around him and about fifty Digger Indians who were his slaves. They were quite friendly, and we all worked together looking after the cattle.

By the time all preparations had been made for winter, the season was pretty well advanced. Through it all, we had not had time to lay in a supply of venison for the winter or to enjoy a good hunt. After everything else had been done and we had rested a few days, we rigged up our pack mules and started for the mountains. I have already described the abundance of game in this country, and on this hunt we found no exception. Deer, antelope, elk and bear in plenty. We had to watch also for California lions, wolves and wildcats. They were abundant also. We were gone on this hunt about a week. Had a camp in which we assembled over night and brought in the results of our day's work. It was great fun to sit about a big camp fire and re-count the experiences of the day. We secured all the venison we could possibly need for a long period of time, and with it set off to our cabin to spend a winter very much the same as we had spent a previous winter farther up the valley.

Our only diversion was with the gun and the dogs. Wild fowl was still abundant, and we had the choicest meats whenever we wanted them. I remember during this winter that a large herd of elk were driven out of the swamp by the water, and into an open valley near our cabin. The dogs sighted them and made for them. They singled out a monster buck and

he took to the water to battle them. The dogs were plucky and swam in after him, but they had little chance, as the water was beyond their depth, while he could easily stand on the bottom. As the dogs would approach him, he would strike them with his front feet and plunger them under. We watched the proceedings for a few minutes and soon saw that our dogs would all be drowned if we let the buck alone, so one of our boys rode in and shot him with his revolver. We dragged him out and dressed him. He was a monster, and must have weighed as much as 800 pounds. His antlers were the largest I have ever seen.

CHAPTER VI.

A Bear Hunt.

By March, our cattle were fat, and we began marketing. A bunch of dairy cows shipped across San Francisco Bay to San Francisco brought two hundred dollars a head. A month later we took over one hundred beef cattle and sold them to Miller and Lucks for one hundred dollars per head, and at various intervals throughout the spring months, we culled out the fattest cattle still on hand and took them over, receiving for all of them prices ranging from seventy-five to one hundred and fifty dollars per head.

Our plan was to stay in California during this summer, and we congratulated ourselves that we were to escape the burning plains. We had very little to do, had plenty of money and plenty to eat, and I believe every man in the camp was pretty well satisfied with California.

Late in the fall, as was our custom, we organized another hunt. I would not mention it but for an incident that occurred out in the mountains which may be interesting. The party consisted of my brothers, William, James and Zack, Joe and Barsh Kessler, and myself. We reached a good place to camp late one evening and pitched our tent. Some of the boys went to work about the camp, others took their guns and went out to look for camp meat and found it. One of the boys brought down a nice deer, and brought it in in time for supper. Next morning the party was up bright and early, and took off in various directions to look for game. We had not been separated a half hour until I heard the guns popping in vari-

ous directions. I was crawling along the side of a gulch making my way up the mountain, and had concluded luck was against me. Shortly after I had made this reflection, I heard the sound of brother William's gun, which I knew very well, off to my right and across the canon. Then I heard a dreadful growling and howling and knew that William had wounded a bear. In a moment I heard a second shot, but the growling continued. I ran down the side of the gulch, crossed the ravine at the bottom, and started up the other side when I saw farther up the mountain a big grizzly making his way slowly along sniffing, growling and plowing through the wild oats that covered the side of the mountain. I was satisfied it was the bear that William had wounded, and I knew it was not safe for me to get very close to him. However, I was then in safe quarters, and I decided to move on to a position where I could get a shot that would bring him down, and, if I could not do this, it was my plan to keep him in sight so I could direct William, who was on horseback, how to follow him. In passing through the brush and undergrowth, however, I lost sight of the bear. I stopped and listened, but could hear nothing. I was in fairly open ground and could see some distance away, and as the bear was quite a distance ahead, I decided to move cautiously along. I really thought the bear had gone over the mountain. I moved slowly and as I approached fairly well toward the top, I noticed a thick bunch of weeds off at a distance, but it did not occur to me that the bear had stopped there. However, I continued up the mountain, intending to leave the weeds to my left. I slipped along until I got opposite the weeds, and there to my great astonishment, I saw the bear not thirty yards from me. His eyes were set upon

me and his hair all turned the wrong way. I then thought for the first time how indiscreet I had been. I had only one chance, and I took that in a hurry. I dropped my gun and started down the mountain for a scrubby tree which stood about sixty yards away. When I started to run the bear took after me. I ran with all my might and as I passed under the tree, I jumped up and grabbed the lower limb and swung myself up. The bear came growling and plowing down the mountain, and raised on his hind feet, and grabbed my boot with one of his paws just as he passed under me, but the ground was so steep and his momentum was so great that it forced him on down the side of the mountain beyond me. This gave me time to go up the tree as high as I could, though it was so small that I could not feel very secure. The bear came back growling and snarling, and came up to the tree, stood up on his hind feet with his paws around the tree, and tried to reach me. I was not over five feet above him, but he could not reach me. I pulled off my hat and threw it upon the ground. He growled and fell back after it, and tore it all to pieces. This seemed to satisfy him for he did not come back to the tree any more, but stood looking around for a while and then walked away. He went on up the side of the mountain, perhaps a hundred yards, and crawled into a thicket of chapparal brush and laid down. I called William as loud as I could but got no answer. I called again and again, and finally he heard me. The first thing he said was, "Look out, there is a wounded bear up there." I called back to him and told him it was gone, but he didn't understand me. He said, "Get back, get away from there, there is a wounded bear in the weed patch right by you." I answered

and told him to come on up, and he did so. He seemed surprised to see me in a tree, but I soon related my experience and pointed out the chapparal brush in which the bear was lying.

I had had a pretty narrow call, but I was not willing to give up without the bear. The question was how could we get him. I would not risk getting down and walking up to the brush patch. One experience of that kind was enough. There was a tree standing a few yards from the thicket, and after looking the situation over a while, I told William to go and ride between the tree and the brush, and keep a close lookout, and I would get down, run to the tree, climb it, and go out on a limb that extended toward the brush where I thought perhaps I could see to get a shot. He said it was a little dangerous, but I told him I was willing to give the old bear a dare anyway, that he had caught me off my guard the first time. We waited quite a long time and heard nothing from the bear, so William concluded to try it. He rode around up the side of the mountain between the brush and the tree, and made considerable noise, but the bear lay still. He called me, and I climbed down, ran as hard as I could, and was soon up the other tree and out of danger. This was a large tree and gave me plenty of protection. After I was well up the tree, I pointed out where I had dropped my gun and William went and got it. He said he had hard work to find it, as it was almost covered with wild oats straw and dust which the bear had dragged over it in his chase after me. The gun was father's old Tennessee rifle and as true a weapon as I ever used.

William handed the gun up to me and I examined it to see if it was all right. I then climbed high up in the tree and went out on the limb that extended toward

the brush. From this point I had a good view down into the thicket and I soon located the bear. I laid my gun across a limb and drew a bead on his head. At the crack of the gun he straightened out and began to tremble and kick, and I knew the fight was over. His struggles dislodged him from his position on the steep mountain side and he tumbled over and over down the slant to the bottom of the gulch. He looked as big as an ox, but not half so dreadful to me as when I was scampering away from him an hour before.

We dressed him and went to camp. The other boys were there and each had a story to tell. Ours was of big game and easily carried away the honors.

We put in a week or more at this camp and had a good time and got any quantity of venison. Everything was so free, the air and water were so pure, and the wild tent life so fascinating that I often think of those days with delight.

Shortly after our return from this hunt, Joe Kessler and I loaded our pack mules and started back across the Sierra Nevada Mountains to meet brother Isaac,who was about due with his drove of cattle from across the plains. We had heard nothing from him since he left us the summer before, but he had told us he expected to get a herd of cattle and come. We met him on Carson River, and as I recall now, there were a number of Buchanan County boys with him—William James, John Sweeney and John Bridgeman were three that I recall. They had some eight hundred or a thousand cattle, and had crossed the plains without any very great difficulty, except the suffering and hardship from the drouth and alkali which could always be expected. We got the cattle across the mountains and on the ranch without difficulty and turned the poor things out to rest and get fat.

We remained on the ranch and in the cabin until everybody was well rested and then Bridgeman and the other boys who had come out with Isaac, began to talk about a hunt. They had heard our bear and deer stories and wanted some experience of their own.

I must tell one thing that occurred on a hunt that was planned for these boys especially, although I have previously related at considerable length my hunting experiences. We had been out in the camp a day or two and had not had much luck, especially with bear; but one afternoon while we were all moving along pretty close together and somewhat contrary to our ordinary methods of hunting, we ran on to two brown bears just as they were going into a dense thicket covering about twenty acres of ground. We had no chance to get a shot before they went in. We immediately surrounded the thicket and posted men at convenient distances apart, and began an effort to dislodge them. In spite of the danger of doing so, some of the boys went into the thicket and made a great noise which drove the bears to the farther side and gave the boys on that side a fair chance for a shot, but they did not get them and the bears ran back into the thicket. The same tactics drove them from one side of the thicket to the other for an hour or more, and nobody was able to make a telling shot. By and by both got away, and everybody was deeply chagrined—especially the boys who were out for the first time.

We moved away from the thicket and down the mountain side, all still much excited, and stopped to rest in a little glade that was almost completely surrounded by thick brush. There was not a loaded gun in the crowd. As we sat there talking, a grizzly bear that looked as big as an old gray mule,

walked out of the brush not twenty steps away. He raised up on his hind feet with his paws hanging down to his sides, dropped his lip and showed his teeth. I don't think I ever saw a crowd of men so badly scared. They jumped and ran in every direction. The closest tree stood between where we were sitting and the bear. Sweeney made for it.

He was beside himself. He tried to climb the tree but lost his hold and fell back. He tried again, but the tree had a smooth trunk and he slipped again. He slid down until he sat flat upon the ground with his arms and legs locked around the tree. Here he lost his head completely. His desire to get up the tree had evidently placed him there in his own imagination, for he called out: "Hand me my gun up here! Hand me my gun up here!" He then said, "Why in the hell don't you boys climb a tree?"

I stood perfectly still and kept my eye on the bear. I soon saw there was no danger in him; that he was as badly scared as we were. He stood a moment, dropped on his four paws to the ground, wheeled and went tearing back through the brush. I told the boys he couldn't understand what they were doing and took their conduct to be preparation for a great fight, and that I didn't blame him for getting scared. If the devil himself had seen them and hadn't understood that they were scared, it would have frightened him.

When we got over our scare, we loaded our guns carefully and started for camp. The boys were still excited and as we passed over the stream which flowed at the bottom of the canon, we saw where a bear had apparently, but a few minutes before been wallowing in the mud and water. The mountain sides were steep and rough and covered with brush, and our boys after their recent fright, were in almost as much terror at

this evidence of nearness to a bear as they were when they could actually see him. The experienced members of the party looked into the situation for a moment and decided that we would probably get this gentleman. We climbed back up the canon, every now and then loosening a big rock and rolling it down through the brush. By and by we routed out a brown bear. He started up the mountain on the opposite side of the gulch and in plain view. I gave him a sample of what my Tennessee rifle could do and sent him rolling back to the bottom of the gulch ready to be dressed.

We remained in camp a week or two on this hunt and everybody, as usual, enjoyed it. We went back to the cabin where six Gibson brothers lived together. The cattle were little trouble, and there was nothing to do most of the time but loaf, and this didn't suit us after so much activity. We soon began to plan for the succeeding year. The cattle were not much trouble and two men could easily take care of them. James, Zack, Robert and myself volunteered to return to Missouri and bring another herd out next year, leaving William and Isaac in charge while we were gone.

CHAPTER VII.

Home by way of Panama and New York.

About the first of November, the four of us left the ranch for San Francisco. There we bought four tickets for New York for eight hundred dollars, and each man belted a thousand dollars in twenty-dollar gold pieces around him. Our ship was the John L. Stephens, and carried about a thousand passengers, besides a large quantity of freight. It was my first experience on the water, and as we sailed out through the golden gate and into the open sea, I had many misgivings and wished myself back upon the plains among the Indians. But in a little while I grew accustomed to life on the ship and really enjoyed the whole trip. At some point on the coast of Old Mexico the ship anchored and took on board a drove of beef cattle, and that was the only stop between San Francisco and Panama.

When we reached Panama the ship anchored about a mile from shore and little black natives rowed out in small boats to carry the passengers in. When the boats reached the side of the ship, they were hoisted by ropes to a level with the deck, loaded with passengers and lowered again to the water. The natives grabbed the oars and away we went. All passengers remained in Panama over night, and next morning a train of pack mules was lined up for the overland trip. We rode twenty miles on mules to the Charges River, then down the river in boats twelve miles and then eight miles by railway to Aspinwall. The ship, George Law, was waiting for us, but it required two days to get all the passengers and baggage

across the isthmus and loaded. During that time we remained in Aspinwall. It was a wonder to me that the task could be finished so quickly. There were a thousand passengers—many women and children—and the sick who had to be carried on stretchers by the natives twenty miles over the mountain to Charges River. Besides, the road was a mere pack trail through rocks and cliffs, often very steep and very rough. To make the task more difficult, the passengers of the George Law—about as many as were on the John L. Stephens—were making the trip in the opposite direction to take our ship back to California. Those were busy days for the natives.

The George Law steamed right up to shore against a rock bluff and the passengers walked directly over the gang plank on to the ship. When all was ready the seamen hauled in the cables and we sailed for New York. The sea was very rough all the way—that is, it seemed so to us. We landed at Key West, but remained there only a few hours and stopped next time at New York City. As the passengers started for shore the captain told them to look out for their pocket books. We had done that back in San Francisco when we put on our belts.

Our first thought on landing was clothing. We were dressed for summer time, as the climate we had been in required, but it was winter in New York, with deep snow on the ground. The afternoon after landing saw us duly provided with plenty of warm clothing and tickets by railroad and boat to St. Louis—railroad by way of Buffalo, Toledo and Chicago to Quincy, and from Quincy to St. Louis by boat. At St. Louis brother Robert was taken sick and we all remained there a week. The usual course from St. Louis home was by stage, but we met a man named Andrew Jack-

son from Holt County, who told us if we would pay him stage fare—twenty-five dollars each—he would buy a span of mules and a carriage and drive us through —as he needed both the mules and the carriage at home. This arrangement was made and we left St. Louis about the middle of December. The weather was very cold, snow a foot deep or more, and the roads very rough in many places. One pleasant thing about the trip was that we always had good, warm lodging places for the night along the road. Towns were close enough together to enable us usually to reach one of them and put up at the tavern, but if we failed in this, we always found good treatment at the farm houses by the way.

A few miles west of Keytesville, Chariton County, we put up one night with a man named Tom Allen, who had a hundred head of steers ranging from two to four years old. They were exactly what we wanted, but were so far from our starting point that we were uncertain whether we could take them. He asked three thousand dollars for the herd. Next morning we looked them over carefully, and told him if he would keep them until the first of April we would take them. He agreed to this and we paid him a thousand dollars down and continued our journey. He was a complete stranger to us and we to him, but in those days men seemed to have more confidence in one another. No writing of any kind was entered into and we felt not the slightest uneasiness about getting the cattle.

We reached home Christmas day, 1853, having made the trip in less than two months.

CHAPTER VIII.

Another trip across the plains with cattle.

From Christmas until the middle of March, 1854, the time passed rapidly, with mother and father and with visits to old friends and acquaintances. On April first, according to contract, we arrived at Tom Allen's in Chariton County, and paid him the balance of two thousand dollars—in gold—and got our hundred head of cattle, all in good condition. As we passed Brunswick, we bought one hundred more and attempted to ferry the whole herd across Grand River in a flat-boat. We cut off a bunch and drove them down the bank on to the boat. They all ran to the farther end of the boat and sunk it, and the cattle went head foremost into the water. All swam back to the same shore, but one steer. He swam to the other side and ran out into the brush. We could do nothing but watch him go and gave him up for lost. A strange thing happened in regard to that steer. Just a year later, I found him on our ranch in California—the same marks and the same brand, besides my recollection of him. There could be no mistake about it. I can account for his presence there easily, for at that time many men were driving cattle across the plains. Some one found him and drove him along and, after arriving, as ranches were large and unfenced, he wandered with other cattle up into our ranch.

After the unsuccessful attempt to ferry the cattle over the river we changed our plan and drove them twenty miles up the river to a point where it could be forded. Passed Carrollton where we picked up a few more cattle, and came on up to John Wilson's in

Clay County, gathering a few here and there until we had three hundred head. Wilson had a herd of one hundred which we bought. These four hundred with two hundred purchased around home completed the herd. By the last day of April we had six hundred head in father's pasture at home, thirty head of horses and mules, two wagons loaded with provisions—four yoke of cattle to each wagon—and twenty men employed to go with us. As we laid the pasture fence down to let that drove of cattle out into the wide world, every man had to be on his guard. It was a timbered, brushy country and very hard to drive the cattle without losing them. There were probably fifty of our neighbors on hand to see us start—many of them on horse-back—and they gave us much assistance. By two o'clock next day we had everything across the river at St. Joe and the cattle herded on a sandbar above where Elwood now stands. After starting off the sandbar we had the same trouble in the heavy timber and with the Indians that we experienced on the first trip, but finally got out on the high plains with horses, cattle and men fairly well trained, and then considered our hard work finished, although two thousand miles of plains and mountains were ahead.

Brothers James, Zack and Robert all started to accompany me on this trip, but, as it was unnecessary to have so many along, James and Robert returned after we had reached Big Blue, to gather up a herd for the following summer, and Zack and I continued the journey. I was considerably older than Zack, and the principal responsibility fell to me. The cattle were very valuable, but, in addition to that, I felt in a measure responsible for the lives of the thirty persons who

accompanied the train—at least, in any conflict with Indians, I would be depended upon for counsel and guidance.

I shall not attempt to give the details of this trip. The road is now familiar to the reader, and I hope also that, by this time, he can appreciate the tediousness of such a journey. He may be aided in this if I say here that we hadn't a pound of grain or hay with us, either for the horses and work cattle or for the herd, but all of them had to subsist by grazing. It was impossible, therefore, to make more than a few miles a day and it was only by determined persistence and a display of patience that I cannot describe, that we ever accomplished the journey. There are a few incidents, which, in addition to the ordinary hardships, served to make the trip still more tedious and trying, and these I will mention.

One night we camped on a high, rolling prairie out beyond Little Blue. The cattle were grazing peacefully and the horses and mules—except those used by brother Zack and myself and by the guards—had been picketed out, and everybody in camp was asleep. One of the mules pulled up his picket stake and dragged it at the end of a long rope through the camp and caught the picket stake in the bow of an ox-yoke. This frightened the mule and he ran into the herd of cattle still dragging the yoke. A stampede followed. Work cattle, horses and mules—everything—and the noise sounded like an earthquake. The guards could not hold the cattle at all. Zack and I, who kept our horses saddled and bridled and tied to a wagon, were out in a moment, but we could give little assistance to the two guards in managing the crazy cattle, and the other men could not come to us for their horses had gone with the cyclone. It was very dark and our only guide to

the location of the cattle was the roar of the ground. After a race of a few miles the roar ceased and we knew the cattle had checked. We rode in front of them and held them until daylight. They were badly scattered and exposed to wolves and Indians. It was twelve o'clock next day before we got them rounded up and ready to start forward. All the cattle and horses were found, but one of our mules was missing. No trace of him could be found anywhere, so we left him alone somewhere on those plains for the Indians or the wolves, or possibly, for a succeeding emigrant train.

Day by day and week by week the journey continued without incident, until we reached a point high up on the North Platte. We camped one night upon the banks of a small stream that emptied into the Platte, and during the night a terrific hail storm came up. Shortly after it broke upon us, one of the guards came and said the cattle had gone with the hail storm, and the guards could do nothing with them. Several of us were on our horses and after them at once. A flash of lightning now and then helped us to find the main bunch, which we rounded up on a sand-bar in Platte River. No more sleep that night. When daylight came the hail lay two inches deep on the ground. I never experienced such a hail storm in my life, and it is my opinion that but few like it have ever visited this country.

The count that morning showed thirteen cattle missing. For fear of a mistake we went forward and strung them out between us and counted again. Still thirteen short. To leave them without further effort was out of the question, so I picked five men—James and Russell Deakins, Joshua Gidlett, Buchanan County boys, and Tom Sherman and Henry Marks, two boys from Boston who joined our train at St. Joseph, and,

with our guns and blankets and a small amount of provisions, started back to circle the camp and look for tracks leading away. I thought the Indians had them and told the boys we would likely have to fight, but all were willing to go. Zack was to move the train slowly forward until he heard from us.

We did not search long after reaching the place where the cattle had been grazing when the storm came up, until we found tracks leading to the north, and by appearances we were able to conclude that there were just about the number we had lost in the bunch that had been driven away. We followed the tracks a few miles, looking all the time for Indian tracks and pony tracks, and could see neither, but there were numbers of what appeared to be dog tracks. This suggested wolves, and I began to look closely at the tracks made by the cattle. Going up the sides of the sand hills the cattle seemed to remain together, but going down they would separate and run, and on level ground would get together again and all circle around and wander back and forth. At such times we had great difficulty in tracing them. The movements of the cattle convinced me that wolves were after them.

The tracks led us to the north about ten miles and then turned westwardly. We had followed in that direction about five miles when night came. As soon as it grew so dark we could not see the tracks, we staked out our horses, ate a lunch and spread our blankets down on the ground. We rested, but slept little. We had seen no Indians, but did not know how many had seen us, and might be following us. Two stood guard at a time while the other three lay on the ground in the darkness with their eyes wide open. At daybreak we were up, and as soon as it was light were

on the trail again. Some miles on the tracks turned south, and this gave us courage, as Platte River and the emigrant road lay that way, but the wolves still had our cattle. The tracks led us on and on and finally up the side of a high range of sand hills, from the top of which we could see the valley of North Platte and the river far in the distance. We followed down the opposite side into the valley, and when within about two miles of the river I saw a bunch of cattle lying down near the bank. I was confident they were our cattle, unless other emigrants had lost a bunch in the storm, which was not probable. We hurried on and when within half a mile of the cattle found a carcass lying in the high grass and twelve or fifteen savage old wolves lying near by asleep. We pulled our navies and waked them up with bullets—killed three and wounded several others. We then rode on and found that the cattle were ours—twelve of them. A three year old heifer missing—the carcass we had found. The cattle were sore and gaunt, but otherwise unhurt. We pulled the saddles off our horses and staked them out to graze and lay down for a little rest. We had been gone from camp twenty-four hours, had had but two scanty meals and were probably twenty-five or thirty miles farther up the trail than the camp we left. Our train had not passed, as there were no fresh tracks on the trail, and we decided to endure our hunger and rest awhile before starting to meet it. In about an hour, however, I looked down the valley and saw the train moving slowly along. It reached us just about noon and all were greatly rejoiced. The noon meal was prepared and I think my tin cup of coffee was the best I ever drank.

The train moved on without incident until we reached a point on North Platte some seventy-five miles above Fort Laramie, where a spur of the mountain, or rather a very high bluff, prevented us from following the river, as had been our purpose on this trip, and forced us across ten miles or more of rocky, mountainous country. When I entered my train upon that part of the journey I calculated there would be no obstruction, as no emigrants were ahead that I had heard of, and I knew no cattle trains were ahead of us. I rode in front always and the lead cattle followed close to my horse's heels. Always the same cattle, three or four in every herd, insisted on being in front, and if left in the rear as the train started out in the morning, they would crowd through the herd and be in front within an hour; then came the whole drove and then the wagons, followed by the loose horses and mules. Strung out in this fashion we started across this portion of the road, which in many places permitted only one wagon and team and not more than four cattle side by side. I led the long, winding string to the top of a mountain, and from that point I could see a line of dark objects a quarter of a mile long approaching us. I looked closely and determined it was Indians, and passed word to that effect back along the line. The men rushed to the wagons and got their guns, and by the time they had returned to their places I had made out that the Indians were moving and that we need not fear attack, as Indians never fight when the squaws and pappooses are along, but I was surprised at the little comfort I received out of that assurance. The puzzle to me was how to meet and pass them without stampeding the cattle. Cattle do not like Indians. They do not like their looks and they do not like their smell, and it is hard work to get them to pass a band of In-

dians on the broad prairie where they have plenty of room to shy. To pass on this narrow road was out of the question. I stopped to think and to look. Some distance ahead, but closer to us than the Indians, I saw what appeared to be a cove or basin, almost completely surrounded by high bluffs and opening upon the road. I rode hurriedly forward, beckoning the men at the same time to push the cattle after me. When I reached the mouth of the basin I stopped and turned the cattle into it. Little more than half the herd had gone in when the Indians came up. The cattle began to hoist their heads and shy, but the Indians did not stop. I rode back a few paces and met them, bowed and said "how-do" as friendly as I knew how, and made signs that I wanted them to stop. They seemed not to understand until I pointed to the cattle, still hoisting heads and tails, and when crowded forward, jumping to the side and running into the basin. When they saw this the whole train stopped. Our cattle and wagons and loose horses all came up and turned in—the men standing along the roadside to see the Indians pass in their turn. When everything was safely lodged in the receptacle, which it seemed to me Providence had designed for just such an emergency, I turned, took off my hat and bowed long and low and rode aside. The Indians bowed in return and passed on. We stood by the roadside and saw the whole caravan pass. There were probably five or six hundred of them—a tribe of the Crows. The long tent poles were tied one on each side of a pony, the ends dragging on the ground behind with a platform or base joining them, on which the tents and skins and such rude camp equipment as they had were piled. The shorter tent poles were tied one on each side of a dog, with baskets resting on the rear ends in

which the pappooses were hauled or dragged along. Everything turned loose—not a halter or strap on dog or pony—all herded or driven like cattle. They were nearly an hour in passing us, and the men who were on the plains for the first time thought it an amusing experience. It required but a short time, after the movers had passed, to get our cattle out and start them on the road again, and, by night, we had passed over the mountains and were back on the river. A double guard kept watch that night, as we feared a band of the bucks that had passed us might come back and try to get some of our cattle, but the moon shone very bright, and as our whole force had stood by the roadside with guns across their saddles, they probably thought such an attempt would be useless.

Our train moved on slowly, passed Independence Rock and over the continental divide and down into Green River Valley. When we reached Green River we rounded the cattle upon a sandbar and forced them all into the water at once. They got to milling around and round and going down the swift current, until we thought they would make the rest of the journey by water, but they soon found the water too cold for their enjoyment and headed for the farther shore. All got out but one.

We took Hedgepeth's cut-off and reached the head waters of Humboldt without difficulty, thence down this river mile after mile, through sage brush and grease wood and alkali shoe mouth deep. As the cattle passed, a dense, black cloud rose above them, almost stifling men, horses and cattle. At night the men were black as negroes and complained of sore throat and sore lungs, but there was no escape. Big Meadows, as I have heretofore described it, afforded a delightful resting place just between the dense alkali and the

sixty-mile desert. But for this oasis, I may call it, where rest and food and water could be had, it is doubtful if herds could have been taken across the plains. Certainly a different trail would have been required.

With all our precautions the trip across the sixty-mile desert was a very hard one. The weather was hot. Not a drop of water nor a blade of grass for thirty hours. When the cattle caught sight of Carson River late one afternoon they went wild. No power could hold them. They ran headlong into the river and next morning five were dead. After the long march across the sand and alkali, the trip up Carson River and over the Sierre Nevada mountains was an easy one, and we made it without difficulty. Going down the opposite side we had to pass through great forests of pine timber, and the cattle, after being so long upon the treeless plains, seemed not to understand this and gave a great deal of trouble. One night we camped near Leake Springs in a heavy body of pine, quieted the cattle and had them all lying down, as we thought, for the night. Something frightened them, and away they started, right across our camp and back toward the top of the mountain. At the first sound of the stampede we jumped to our feet, whooped and yelled, threw our blankets in their faces and tried in every way to stop them, but they paid no attention and came crashing on through the brush. We were compelled to get behind trees to protect ourselves, and after the tornado of cattle had passed, gathered our horses and took after them. They were all strung out on the road, running as fast as they could, and we had to pass them by making our poor jaded horses outrun them. It was no easy task, and the leaders of the bolt for home were some fifteen miles away before we overtook and passed them. It

was almost daylight when we succeeded in doing this, and it required most of next day to gather all of them up and get back to camp. Not a man had a morsel to eat until we returned to camp. We decided to keep moving slowly throughout the entire succeeding night, as the best means of preventing another stampede and in order to get out of the timbered mountains and into the valley where the cattle were not so apt to get excited. Early next day we reached the valley and stopped. Horses, men and cattle took a good rest. This stampede jaded both horses and cattle more than crossing the sixty-mile desert, hard as that was.

After a day's rest we pulled on and passed through the mining district of Weaver Creek and American River, and reached Sacramento River at Sacramento City, crossed the river on a ferry and camped for the night on the farther bank. No guard out that night—the first in four months—and the boys went up to see the sights of the town. Human tongue can hardly tell the relief I felt when I could lie down and sleep without fear of Indians or wolves or stampedes. A better set of men than I had with me never crossed the plains, always ready for duty and to help me out of trouble. It was about thirty miles out to our ranch and I told the boys if they would go out with me I would board them as long as they wanted to stay. About half of them went and the others began to look about for themselves. It was an affectionate farewell that took place between us, and in all the years that have passed I have never seen many of those boys, but I shall never forget them.

We reached the ranch without difficulty and turned the cattle loose. The poor things had been traveling so long and had become so accustomed to it

that we had to watch them every day for nearly a month. They seemed to think they had to be moving, and after grazing awhile in the morning would string out on any road or path they could find and sometimes get miles away—the old leaders always in front—before we would discover them. After awhile we got them convinced that their journey had ended and that grass belly deep was a reality which they might actually enjoy.

CHAPTER IX.

Sojourn in California.

The fall of 1854 and the winter and spring of 1855 were not unlike our previous winters in California. There was but little to do except watch the cattle to keep them from straying. Hunting was about the only diversion and game was still plentiful. Grass was abundant all through the winter and the cattle fattened rapidly. During the spring and summer months we marketed all that were in proper condition, still receiving excellent prices. About the first of August brother Zack and I rigged up our pack mules and started back to meet James and Robert who had turned back the year before to gather up another herd and bring it across the plains during the summer. We passed over the mountains and reached the sixty-mile desert, which was about two hundred and fifty miles back on the plains from our ranch. In all the year we had heard nothing from home, and the only information we had that they were on the road was the promise they made us as they left our train the year before.

We camped just at the western edge of the desert and during the night a train pulled in off the desert. We inquired of them next morning whether they had seen or heard of Gibson's train. They said they had passed it somewhere on Humboldt River, but could not give the exact location. They also told us the Indians had killed one of the Gibson boys. They did not know which one—had just heard of the circumstance as they passed. This sad news was a great blow to us. We broke camp hurriedly and started across the desert, weighed down by the sad reflection that we would

meet only one of our brothers—both equally dear, not only from boyhood association and ties of kindred, but from association in hardship across the dreary plains. We carried our weight of sorrow all that day and all the following night, across the barren sand, and at daylight we could barely make out Humboldt Lake in the distance. Upon closer approach we saw a large herd of cattle just being rounded up preparatory to the start across the desert. We hurried forward, hoping it was the train we were looking for, and yet fearing to know the truth of the rumor we had heard. A few moments dispelled our doubts. It was Gibson's train and Brother James was alone with his cattle and his men. Robert, our mother's baby, seventeen years old, was the victim. Brother James, with tears streaming down his sunburnt face, related to us the manner of his death at the hands of treacherous Indians, and the train halted on the threshold of the desert long enough for us to hear the story and dry the tears from our eyes.

He said one day while on their journey over the mountains between Fort Laramie and the higher waters of North Platte, and while the herd was moving forward in order, he rode ahead to locate a camping place for the night and left Robert in charge. He had been gone but a short time when six Indians came up to the train and in their way inquired for the captain. One of the men told them he was in the rear. They rode back and when they reached the men in the rear turned their ponies and rode along with the train some distance. Robert, who, though only seventeen, had made four trips across the plains and understood the Indians, told the boys to watch them as he thought they were up to mischief. He feared they intended to get between the wagons, which were traveling close up behind the cattle, and loose horses and

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mules, which were in the extreme rear, and cut them off, so he dropped back and motioned the men who were driving the horses and mules, to close up and at the same time stopped the wagons. He had the stock driven around the wagons, thus placing them between the cattle and the wagons, leaving the wagons in the extreme rear. He then took his place alongside the cattle. All this time the Indians had said nothing, had simply followed along with the train. The show of authority was what they were waiting for. They evidently could not believe the boy they saw was in fact the captain. As soon as Robert took his place by the side of the cattle three of the Indians rode up by his side and began to jabber and make signs. The other three rode up behind him. One of the three behind had an old army musket and while the three in front engaged Robert the one with the gun rode up very close and shot him in the back. He fell from his horse and was dead in an instant. The Indians whirled and galloped away as fast as their ponies could carry them. One of the boys rode forward to notify Brother James and met him returning at full speed. He had heard the report of the gun and knew by the sound that it was an Indian's gun, and that it meant mischief of some kind. As soon as he returned to the train he mounted ten men and armed them and started after the Indians. After following about five miles he came in sight of them. About the same moment the Indians spied him and laid whip to their ponies. They were making for the mountains, but soon saw they would be overtaken and turned in the direction of the river. A hot race followed with the white men gaining all the time, but the Indians reached the river and plunged their ponies in. They had hardly reached the farther shore when James and his men were upon the bank. They fired

at them but the distance was too great for the shots to take effect. The party thought it unwise to cross the river in pursuit, as it might be difficult to recross and all this time the cattle and the train were insufficiently guarded, so they turned and made their way back, conscious that had they overtaken the Indians and slain them all such an act could not have restored Robert to them, and their hearts would still have been heavy with their loss.

When they returned to the train the boys had rounded up the cattle and were standing guard over them and the dead body. Nothing could be done but move on, but what was to be done with Robert's body? James said to attempt a burial where the wolves and coyotes would dig the body up was out of the question, and then he could not bear the idea of leaving him alone on those desolate mountains. So he put the body in one of the wagons and carried it forward two days journey, where they came to a trading post on the upper crossing of North Platte kept by an old Frenchman. There they procured a wagon box which they used for a coffin and buried him the best they could and protected the grave from wolves. James, learning that the Frenchman intended to go back to St. Joseph in about two months, employed him to take the body back with him and gave him an order for five hundred dollars in gold on Robert Donnell. I may as well relate here that the Frenchman kept his promise, brought the body back and got his money, and that Robert now lies buried in the old family cemetery in Tremont Township. I learned this on my return, and that mother identified the body by examining the toes, one of which Robert had lost in an accident when quite a little boy.

Although the story was a sad one and our hearts were very heavy, still we could not tarry with our grief. The cattle must cross the desert and reach food and water beyond. James asked if we had had breakfast. I told him we had not—that we had traveled hard all night, but that we had a camp outfit and would prepare something after the cattle had started across the desert. When the train was under full way, we stirred the coals of their camp fire, threw on some greasewood brush and soon prepared bread and meat and coffee. The mules browsed on grease wood and we rested a couple of hours and then started after the train. All that day and all the next night—a steady drive, only now and then an hour's halt for food for ourselves and rest for the cattle. By eleven o'clock the following morning we were on Carson River, and glad we were, too. Zack and I had crossed over, taking twenty-four hours and back thirty hours—fifty-four hours without sleep or rest except two hours at the end of our first journey. In all my travels, and I look at it now after more than fifty years, with the experiences of the Civil War intervening, I have never seen a place so beautiful as Carson River and valley, not because it is more picturesque or naturally more enchanting than many places I have seen, but because it was so welcome with its cold mountain waters and fresh green vegetation after our weary journeys across the barren desert, and I never thought it more beautiful to behold than on this, my last visit.

Men, cattle and horses all took a good long rest, but the train was up and many miles on the road before Zack and I awoke and followed. Two weeks more and the cattle were safe on the ranch and we were

off duty once more, and as events transpired, off the plains for all time—after nearly seven years of almost constant hardship.

During the fall of 1855 and the spring of 1856 we marketed off the fat cattle. Sold Graham and Henry of Georgetown five hundred head to be delivered fifty head every two weeks. Georgetown was a mining camp one hundred miles northeast of our ranch. Our cattle were scattered over our own ranch and the ranches of Phillips, Wolfscale and Barker, and were well mixed with their wild cattle and horses. It rained almost constantly. The plains were boggy and the streams full of water. We had no time to lose and were in the saddle almost day and night, if not on the road to Georgetown, then rounding up and sorting out the cattle. We delivered the first fifty head on the fifteenth day of October and the last on the first of April, and were glad when our task was over.

The summer following passed without event worthy of mention. In the fall we sold Graham & Henry three hundred more cattle to be delivered in the same manner as the first, and had much the same experience, except that our work did not last so long.

In the fall of fifty-seven, we sold our fat cattle and dairy cows to Miller & Lux, wholesale dealers in cattle in San Francisco. Delivery there was not so difficult. Our ranch was but twenty miles from San Francisco Bay, and after a drive to the shore of the bay the cattle were shipped across to the city. In the spring of eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, Brother Isaac withdrew from the business and returned to Missouri. We gave him fourteen thousand dollars in gold and deeded him sixty acres of land in Tremont Township, Buchanan County, for his interest. We continued the business through the year 1859 as partners. Brother William

remained with us, but had his own cattle and kept them on our ranch. Zack and I still had about one thousand head of stock cattle, and during the year, we bought several lots both of stock cattle and heifers. One bunch of a hundred heifers we turned over to James Glenn and Barsh Kessler, Buchanan County boys, to keep three years and breed for us, with the understanding they were to have half of the increase as pay for their trouble. Another bunch of fifty heifers was turned over to Perry Jones, another Buchanan County boy, on the same terms.

Toward Christmas we heard that our mother had died. This left our old father alone on the farm with the negroes, and we decided to leave our cattle in the care of Jones, Glenn and Kessler and go back and visit him. It was too late in the season to attempt the plains. The hot, dry summer on the plains had parched and withered the scant vegetation that had grown in the spring and early summer, and the excessive cold and accumulations of snow in the higher altitudes, rendered a trip by land almost impossible in winter, so, much as we disliked the trip by water, we decided to make it. I will not attempt to relate the incidents of this trip, as they were unimportant. There was, besides, little to distinguish it from the first voyage over the same route, which I have already described.

After reaching home we remained with our father until the first of May, when the start back overland must be made. It was decided that one of us must remain with father, and as Zack and I were in partnership and William was alone in his business, the choice of remaining at home lay between Zack and myself, as either of us could easily care for our cattle. I gave

the choice to Zack and he decided he would go, and he and William, accordingly, rigged up our outfit and started.

I took charge of the farm at home and with the help of the negroes, managed it through the season, and thus relieved father of all worry and responsibility. He had his horse and buggy and a black boy to care for it and drive him about the farm and over the neighborhood. Everything moved along in the usual way and I had a pleasant and restful summer—not so much restful from work, but restful compared with the excitement and over-exertion incident to a journey with cattle across the plains. I congratulated myself upon the choice Zack had made and was preparing for a year or two more of peace and quiet, but the death of my father the following fall left me alone with the farm and negroes. I remained with them throughout the winter, lonely and unpleasant as it was without my father, and planted and harvested most of the crop in sixty-one under many trying conditions. Stirring public events which began with the breaking out of the war interrupted my farming operations, and my part in them will furnish the material for several succeeding chapters.

CHAPTER X.

Beginning of the War.

Shortly after the beginning of the war, Elijah Gates organized a company of southern boys, and most of my neighbors enlisted for six months. They wanted me to join them, but I said "no." I had been in camp for ten years and had some idea of the hardship of a soldier's life. I knew my place there on the farm would give me a far better opportunity to take the rest I felt to be so needful after my years of activity on the plains and in camp, and I could not be easily induced to leave it. Besides, I could not believe that a terrible war was upon us, and for a long time I had great faith that wise counsel would prevail and some reasonable adjustment be made of the differences between the North and the South.

Gates' company and the regiment to which it had been assigned left home with a great flying of colors, but notwithstanding my expressed sympathy with the South, this did not tempt me and I remained at home with my crop. I took no part in the wild talk that could be heard on every hand and paid close attention to my own business, but I soon found that I would not be permitted to live in peace. The Southern boys had no sooner left for the front than the opposition began to pour in around me. My sentiments were well known—in fact I had never tried to conceal them, believing that a man in this country had a right to his opinions, but no man could point to a hostile word uttered by me. Notwithstanding this, those who were not willing to allow me to hold my opinions in peace began to harass and threaten me. I endured it until

about the first of August, when I saddled my horse, buckled my navies around me and started alone to join the Southern army. I rode to Liberty where I expected to fall in with a company that I had heard was being organized, but it had gone. I met a man from St. Joseph by the name of Walter Scott, who was likewise disappointed at arriving too late for the company, and he and I set out together to join Price in Arkansas. We rode slowly along, stopping at night at farm houses and talked little to anyone about our plans. When within about ten miles of Springfield we stopped for the night with a man who told us that Lyon's army was at Springfield and that Price was camped at Wilson's Creek, about ten miles southwest of Springfield.

I knew there was going to be a fight, and I slept little that night. It came sooner than I expected, for about sun up next morning we heard cannon off to the southwest. We sprang out of bed, and without waiting for breakfast, saddled our horses and galloped away. I knew Gates' company and my neighbors were in the fight and I wanted to help all I could. We had no trouble finding the way as the cannon and muskets were roaring like loud thunder and the smoke was boiling up out of the valley like a black cloud. We guessed right that Lyon had advanced out of Springfield and was between us and Price's army, but we hurried on expecting to take care of that situation after getting closer to the battle. When within a few miles of the battle ground the firing ceased and shortly afterwards we saw Federal soldiers coming toward us. We galloped away from the road and hid behind a cliff of rock and watched them go by. They were completely disorganized. Every man was pulling for Springfield in his own way, from five to fifty in a bunch, the bunches from one to three hundred yards

apart. Some had guns, some had none. Some had hats, some were bare-headed. Every battery horse carried two and some carried three—all hurrying on. We finally grew tired, and at the first opportunity dashed across the road between squads and made our way along a by-path toward the battlefield. We had not gone far until we met wounded men trying also to make their way back to Springfield. Some would walk a short distance and get sick and lie down by the roadside and beg for water. Some would hobble on in great misery, stopping now and then to rest. Others, and the more fortunate it seemed to me, had crawled off in the brush and died.

In advancing we found it would be necessary to cross the main battlefield in order to reach Price's camp which was located down on the farther side of Wilson's Creek. Here we found the dead lying so thick that we had to pick our way and then often had difficulty in going forward without riding over a dead body.

We reached the camp and asked to be shown to Gates' company. All were glad to see us and made many inquiries about home and families and friends. They were just cooking breakfast. William Maupin apologized for their late breakfast by saying that "Pap" Price had called upon them very early to do a little piece of work and they had just finished it and that had delayed their breakfast. I told them what I had seen on the road down and up upon the battlefield, and asked how their company had fared. They told me that one man, George Shultz, was shot through the head the first round and that was the only loss their company had sustained. This was the tenth day of August, 1861.

Next day I helped bury the dead Federal soldiers, and when this was done Price moved his army up to Springfield, as the Union army had in the meantime gone back to St. Louis. We remained there some two or three weeks. During my stay, Mrs. Phelps, the wife of Colonel Phelps, who commanded a regiment in Lyon's army at Wilson's Creek, and who had gone with the army to St. Louis, called on General Price for protection. She lived about two miles east of Springfield, and by the way, if I remember correctly, General Lyon was buried out at her place. Price sent Gates with his company, and as I had joined that company, I went along. We remained there as long as Price was camped in Springfield and took good care of her premises.

Price decided to go north and this greatly pleased the boys. He had no army—just a lot of boys who furnished their own horses, guns, ammunition and blankets and most of the time their own provisions. He had little, or at least he didn't attempt to have much, discipline. We elected our own lieutenant, captain and colonel by vote, and General Price seemed entirely satisfied so long as we were all on hands when there was any fighting to be done.

When we reached Little Osage River on our way north, Price went into camp and next day sent Gates out on a scout. Gates went in the direction of Fort Scott. We traveled about fifteen miles and came within a short distance of the Fort where we found two soldiers herding a drove of horses and mules on the grass. Lane was in Fort Scott with a large force, but evidently he had no idea Price was anywhere near for he had no pickets out. We made a run for the horses and mules and took them and tried to get both men, but one of them got away. We knew he would report

and that would give us trouble. If we could only have secured both men we could have had the entire herd in our camp before Lane could have discovered that it was gone. We determined to do our best and get away if possible. Each horse and mule had a long rope attached to his neck which dragged along behind and this gave us much trouble and prevented fast traveling, as the horses stepped on the ropes and checked their speed. We got some four or five miles away and when on top of a high hill we looked back across the prairie and saw what appeared to be about two thousand mounted soldiers coming in hot haste after us. Gates had but five hundred men. The ground was hilly and Gates picked a few men and sent them on with the horses. He then stopped half his men just over the turn of the first hill, dismounted them and detailed every fourth man to take the horses further down the slant and hold them. The remainder lay flat down on the ground. The other half of his company he sent over beyond the next hill with directions to follow the same course. When our pursuers were a little more than half way up the hill coming toward us, we arose and fired into them. Lane dismounted his men and threw them in line of battle. By that time we were on our horses and gone. They could not see that we were gone and approached the top of the hill with great caution. This caused delay and that was what we wanted. When they found we were gone they mounted and followed. When about half way up the next hill the other half of our company gave them another round and, as they feared we intended this time to make a stand, they again dismounted and prepared to fight. They were again disappointed. This was kept up for several miles. When we first saw we were pursued a courier was sent to

Price, but before Price could rally his army and reach us Lane gave up the idea of recovering his horses and went back to Fort Scott. We had one man wounded in the arm.

We all returned to camp on Little Osage and next morning broke camp and started off as usual. I did not know the plan, but when Gates' company was placed in front and led off over the same road we had traveled the day before, I knew an attack on Fort Scott was in mind. When about ten miles out we came to the top of a hill overlooking a wooded valley with a small dry creek running through it. We could see a long distance across the valley into the prairie hills beyond, but could see no sign of soldiers. The whole force halted and Gates was directed to go forward across the valley and through the timber, which I judge was nearly a mile in width. We passed down the hill and went very cautiously through the woods, but neither saw nor heard anything to arouse suspicion. On reaching the farther side of the timber we stopped and got off our horses to rest and allow them to graze. The whole company was entirely off guard and the boys were talking and laughing and having a good time, when suddenly cannon and muskets began to roar behind us.

We soon saw what had happened. The Federal troops lay concealed in the timber and on discovering that we were but an advance guard, allowed us to pass, guessing aright that Price, after allowing us time to pass through, would, if we were not molested, move his main force forward. Price had followed us and the guns we heard were the beginning of the attack upon him. In a moment every man was in the saddle. We dashed back through the timber and found that Lane had advanced and attacked Price in the open

and while in the line of march. We could see some confusion, and it took a good while to get the men up out of the line of march and in a position to fight. Bledsoe's battery, however, was in action and Lane's men charged and captured it, wounding Bledsoe. Presently two regiments came up and recaptured the battery. By that time a second battery had come up and opened fire. We were still in the rear of Lane and in great danger from our own men. We picked a time when everybody on both sides seemed to be engaged and started around to the right of Lane and up the crest of a long ridge that led to the top of the hill. When about half way to the top a company of cavalry started up a little valley to our left to cut us off. We had the best horses and a little the advantage in distance. Besides we were going toward our own army and getting safer all the time, while the company pursuing us was all the time getting closer to danger. We hoped they would follow until a company of our men could cut in between them and their main force, but they were too cautious for that and abandoned the chase. We galloped around, reaching our forces just as the fight was over.

When our whole force was brought up and placed in fighting line the situation got too severe for an army with a good shelter behind it, so Lane's men broke ranks and started for the timber. They made no attempt to rally and come again, but went directly on to Fort Scott. The road was dry and the dust fogged up through the timber like a black cloud and made a good target for our batteries. Lane lost more men and horses in the retreat through the timber than in the main fight. Price crossed to the opposite side of the valley and camped for the night. Next morning

very early he sent a scouting party with directions to ascertain as far as possible the probable strength of the forces in Fort Scott. The party found the place completely evacuated and so reported. Price made no attempt to follow, but continued his journey to the north.

CHAPTER XI.

The Battle of Lexington.

When within a few miles of Warrensburg, we learned that a portion of Mulligan's force was camped there. We camped for the night and next morning discovered that the detachment had gone during the night to join the main force at Lexington. Gates was ordered to follow them. We traveled all day on a forced march, and when within a short distance of Lexington were fired upon from both sides of the road from behind corn shocks. We hastily dismounted and commenced shooting at the corn shocks. The firing from behind then soon ceased and the men hurried away towards Lexington. We followed, but as we were then less than a mile from the town we thought it unwise to go too close until our main force came up.

Next day Price came up and made his headquarters in the fair ground just south of town. We camped there three days picket-fighting but getting ready all the time to attack Mulligan behind his breast-works. We had to mold our bullets and make our cartridges and when sufficient ammunition had been prepared we were ready. We marched up and were met at the edge of the town where the fighting began. We marched down the sidewalks on each side of the streets with a battery in the center of the roadway. Mulligan's men fought well and kept the street full of musket balls, but when the battery would belch out its grape shot they had to go back. I well remember, that at every opportunity we would jerk the picket fences down and go in behind the brick walls to shun the bullets. When the end of the wall was reached we had

to step out on the sidewalk and face the music. They made a great effort to keep us out of town before they went behind their breast-works, but they had to go.

When Mulligan reached and went behind his fortifications we closed in and surrounded him except upon the side next the river. Price sent a regiment up the river and one down the river. They charged and captured those portions of the breast-works which prevented us from getting to the river front and thus in their rear. This was done late in the evening and Gates' regiment lay on the hillside behind a plank fence all night to prevent a recapture. They made several attempts during the night but failed each time.

The warehouses were full of hemp bales, and next morning we got them out and rolled them up the hill in front of us—two men to the bale—both keeping well down behind it. When we got in sight of their ditches we had a long line of hemp bales two deep in front of us, and then the fight commenced in earnest. They shot small arms from their ditches and cannon balls from their batteries. Sometimes a ball would knock down one of our top bales,but it soon went back in place We brought our battery up behind the breastworks and by taking the top bale off we made an excellent port-hole for the muzzles of our guns. The fight went on some two or three hours in this way. They in their ditches and we crouched behind our hemp bales. Every time a man showed his head half a dozen took a shot at him. They soon learned to keep their heads down, but they would put their hats on gun sticks and hold them up for us to shoot at, but we soon discovered this device and wasted very few bullets afterwards.

If this situation continued it looked as if the siege might last a month, so we decided to move closer. The top bales were pushed off and rolled forward with two men lying nearly flat behind each bale. When within forty yards of the trenches the front row halted and waited for the rear line of bales to come up. It took but a moment to hoist the one upon the other and thus we put our breastworks in much better position. Our batteries came up with little trouble, as we covered the opposite line so completely that no one dared to raise his head and shoot. Their batteries were posted on an exposed hill some two hundred yards away, but not a man was to be seen about them. Their gunners had all gone to the trenches. Our only suffering was when moving our hemp bales up the first time, and again when we advanced them the second time, as at these times we were too busy to return the fire, but we were well protected and lost very few men.

We lay in this position for three days. Mulligan's trench must have been nearly two miles long. We had no idea what was going on at any other point, but guessed the situation was very much the same along the whole line. We could hear through the woods a single gun now and then, reminding us more of a squirrel hunt than a battle. At the end of three days Mulligan surrendered. We were glad to see the white flag, not so much because it meant victory for us as because we were hungry and tired.

Mulligan marched his men out and had them stack arms. Then we marched them away from their arms and lined them up unarmed. Price took charge and put a guard around them, and then paroled them and sent them home. Some of them went back to Buchanan County where they told friends of ours that Price had no privates in his army; that they saw nobody un-

der a lieutenant. They may have reached this conclusion from the way all left the hemp bales and went up to see the surrender.

Price went back to Springfield and Gates and his company came home. Billy Bridgeman, a nephew of mine who lived near Bigelow, in Holt County, was with us and when we reached my home he wanted me to go on with him to his home. It was a dangerous trip. St. Joe, Savannah, Forest City and Oregon were full of soldiers. We left home in the morning about daylight, passed up east and north of St. Joe, crossed the Nodaway River just above its junction with the Missouri, hurried across the main road between Oregon and Forest City, where we were most apt to be discovered, and reached his home on Little Fork, about night. We remained there about three days when some zealous female patriot saw us and reported us. We learned that we had been reported and kept a close watch all day and at night, feeling sure that the Forest City company would try to capture us, we saddled our horses and rode out away from home. It was bright moonlight, and when about two miles from home we heard them coming and stopped in the shadow of some trees. When they got within forty yards of us we fired into them with our navies, and kept it up until we had emptied our six-shooters. They whirled and ran back as fast as their horses could carry them. We loaded our guns and followed. The first house they passed one man jumped off his horse and left him standing in the road. We stopped at the fence and called. A woman came out of the house. I asked her if any soldiers had passed there. She said—I use her words just as she uttered them: "Yes, they went

down the road a few minutes ago like the devil was after them." Billy and I did not know we had scared them so.

The fine mare Billy's father had given him hurt her foot in some way and was limping badly, so he pulled off the saddle and bridle and turned her loose. She started at once for home, and Billy saddled up the horse that had been left and we started on. It was then midnight and we had sixty miles before us. It was dangerous to ride in daylight, but more dangerous to stop anywhere on the road as we had no friends or acquaintances on the way. We could do nothing but go on and take chances. When, early in the forenoon, we reached the ford of the Nodaway on the old Hackberry road leading from Oregon to Savannah, we met a man who told us that a regiment of soldiers had left Savannah that morning for Oregon. We crossed the river and turned to the right, leaving the main road and picking our way to the bluffs of the Missouri and down along these bluffs to a point just above St. Joseph. There we left the bluffs and went across the country to Garrettsburg on Platte River and reached home just at night. I called our old black woman out of the house and asked her if she had heard of any soldiers in the neighborhood and if she thought it would be safe for us to stop for supper. She said she had heard of no soldiers and she thought there would be no danger, but that Brother Isaac and George Boyer were up at Brother James' house waiting for us, so we rode on up there.

We watered and fed our tired and hungry horses and had a good supper—the first mouthful since supper the night before—and all sat down to rest and talk. The house was a large two-story frame building fronting north, built upon a plan that was very popu-

lar in those days. A wide hall into which the front door entered from a portico, separated two large rooms—one on the right and the other on the left. A long ell joined up to the west room or end and extended back to the rear. A wide porch extended along the east side of the ell and along the south side of the east room of the front or main part of the building. A door in the rear of the front hall opened upon this porch, while doors from each of the rooms in the ell also led out upon the porch. We were all in the east front room with Brother James and his family. Brother Isaac and I were talking over our business affairs. Bridgeman had lain down upon a sofa and dropped off to sleep, and Boyer and Brother James and his family were chatting pleasantly, when a company of soldiers sneaked up and stationed themselves around the house. After they were sufficiently posted the captain gave us the first notice of their presence by calling out in a loud voice, "Come out, men, and give yourselves up, you will not be hurt." We knew by that call that a good strong force was outside and that trouble was at hand. We hurriedly lowered the window shades and blew out the light and remained perfectly still. The captain called again, urging that we would be treated as prisoners of war if we would surrender. We knew too well the value of such a promise made by the captain of a self-appointed gang of would-be regulators, who did not know the duty of captors toward their prisoners, and if they had known were not to be trusted. Besides we had no notion of surrendering as long as our ammunition held out.

When the captain found we were not to be coaxed out by his false and flattering promises, he began to show his real intentions. He said, "Come out! G— d— you, we have got you now." We still gave no answer.

Then he said if we did not come out he would burn the house down over our heads. When that failed he called on us to send the women and children out so he could burn the house. We accommodated him that much and sent them out. I told them to go out at the front door and to be sure and close it after them. When the women were gone we opened the door and passed into the hall and then to the back or south door, Bridgeman in front. He opened the door just enough to peep out. He had a dragoon pistol in his right hand and a Colt's navy in his left. When the door opened a man stepped up on the porch with his bayonet fixed and told Billy to come on. Billy gave him an ounce ball and he fell back off the porch. The fight was then on and had to be finished. Just after Billy fired the shot he accidentally dropped his navy from his left hand and it fell behind the door in the dark. He stooped to feel for it and Brother Isaac asked, "Billy was that you shot?" I told him that it was. He then said, "we must get out of here now." With that, and before Billy found his gun, I jerked the door wide open and went out. Brother Isaac followed me, Boyer next and Billy last. There was no one to be seen but the dead man by the side of the porch. The others had taken shelter behind the east end of the house and the south end of the ell. I went south along the ell porch and Isaac followed close behind me. When I got to the end of the porch I jumped off and there I found about a dozen men lined up. They fired at me but the blaze went over my head. I turned my face to them and took a hand myself. By that time Brother Isaac was at my side, and, although unaccustomed to warfare, he did good service. We opened fire and they turned and ran. We followed them around the house and ran them off the premises and out into the public road.

When Billy found his navy and came out, he saw men at the east end of the house firing across at us from the rear so he ran down the porch that led to that end of the house. Just as he reached the end of the porch a man stepped from behind the house and raised his gun to shoot at us. Quick as a flash Billy stuck the end of his navy within six inches of the man's face and shot him in the mouth. The man dropped down on the ground and bawled like a steer. At this the men farther around in the chimney corner broke and ran and Billy followed. They did not stop running and Billy did not stop shooting until they were well off the premises.

Boyer who was the third man out of the house afterwards related his experience to me. He jumped off the porch and ran out through the back yard. He stumbled and fell over a bank of dirt that had been thrown out of a well, but Brother Isaac and I were keeping all of them so busy that no one seemed to notice him. He was up in a moment and going again. When he got to the rear of the smoke house he ran over a man who lay hid in the weeds. The fellow jumped up and ran and Boyer shot at him, but both kept on running. Boyer reached a corn field and lay hid the remainder of the night.

After the fight was over Billy, Brother Isaac and I went down into the woods and sat for a long time talking it over. We had no idea how many men were in the company, but were confident that it went away somewhat smaller than when it came. They got our horses and saddles and, as we had fired all the loads out of our pistols in the fight, we had nothing but the clothes on our backs and our empty revolvers. We didn't dare go back to the house, so, late in the night, we started out first to replenish our ammunition. We

stopped at Jack Elder's, a mile to the west. He gave us powder and bullets, but he had no caps. We then went over to Judge Pullins' who had a good supply and furnished us plenty of them. After loading our guns we went north to the home of Joe Evans. Evans was a lieutenant in the Southern army, and his wife, who was Nelly Auxier, was at home with her children. We had known her from childhood, so we went in and went to bed. Nelly sat up the remainder of the night and kept watch. This was the first sleep in nearly forty-eight hours. At seven she woke us for breakfast. About ten o'clock Judge Pullins, who knew where we were, brought over the morning St. Joe paper. It contained a long account of the fight, and said that Penick's men had gone down into "the hackle" the night before and killed two of the Gibson boys and captured the remainder of the "gang." This was amusing news, and about as near the truth as most reports of that kind.

Although it was dangerous for us to travel by daylight, we concluded we might, with proper caution, get back over the ground and see for ourselves what had been done. We kept well in the timber and reached Brother James' house about noon. The house was considerably scratched up by bullets and blood was strewn all around it. Four men had been killed and five wounded. Harriet, our old negro woman, told us the soldiers had first stopped at father's old place and inquired for us. She started across the fields at once to notify us, but could not make the half mile on foot in time and had reached only a safe distance from the house when the fight began.

We remained in the neighborhood, hidden at first one place and then another for several days. Brother Isaac, being rather too old to go in the army left home and went to Illinois for safety, as he knew there would

be no peace for him after the fight, no matter how conservative he had been in the past or how well behaved he might be in the future. The unfortunate circumstance which, on account of his association with us, had compelled him to fight for his life, had rendered his efforts to remain at home out of the question. Billy and I, having lost our horses, saddles and blankets, were compelled to remain, in spite of the fact that soldiers were hunting us like hounds, until we could get properly equipped to leave. We were not long in doing this, and then we set out on horseback through a country patroled by many soldiers to join our company at Springfield.

CHAPTER XII.

Back to the South.

We left in the afternoon, and, taking byroads, passed Stephen Bedford's and went on to Doc Brown's on Casteel Creek. We spent the night there. Brown kept us up until midnight, asking questions about our experiences at Wilson's Creek, Fort Scott and Lexington and about the fight with Penick's men at Brother James' house. He had heard the firing although eight miles away, and suspected that some of the Gibson boys were in the fight. We started early next morning for Clay County where my sister, Mrs. Harrison Wilson, lived. We reached her home without difficulty and remained there over night. It was about fifteen miles from her home to the Missouri River where we expected to have trouble, as soldiers were on guard at every crossing point between St. Joseph and the Mississippi. If we could not find a ferry unguarded we expected to bind cottonwood logs together, get on them and swim our horses alongside. This was disagreeable and very dangerous and was not to be thought of so long as there was any chance to cross on a ferry. We decided, therefore, to go to old Richfield and try the ferry by fair means or foul. We reached the high bluff that overlooks the town, about five o'clock in the afternoon, and looked cautiously down. The soldiers were camped just below the town and the ferry landing was a little above it. Everything was quiet—no soldiers up in town or about the ferry landing that we could see. While we were watching, the ferry boat crossed to this side and landed. We rode quietly down the hill and on to the boat. Billy asked the ferryman

if he was going right back. He said no, that he made regular trips. Billy asked how long before he would start. He said thirty minutes. Billy told him we could not wait that long, and that he must go back immediately. The ferryman looked up into Billy's face and said he would wait for time. In an instant he found himself looking into the muzzle of a Colt's navy. Billy told him to stand perfectly still if he valued his life. I jumped off my horse and loosed the cable that held the boat to shore. The current carried the boat out into the river and Billy told the ferryman to take charge and set us over. He did it without a word and we rode out in safety on the other shore. In all that happened on the boat, not a loud word was spoken, and, so far as I know, the soldiers did not even suspect our presence.

When we rode out on firm land on the southern side of the Missouri we felt much safer, because the task we had most dreaded was over. We passed about five miles into the country and put up for the night at a farm house where we found seven or eight southern men all on their way to the Confederate lines. Two of these were Confederate soldiers and the remainder were old men leaving home for safety. The two soldiers were John Culbertson of Buchanan County and Sol Starks of Clay County. The next morning about nine o'clock, as we rode peacefully along, two boys about twelve years of age came galloping toward us as fast as their horses could carry them. We said nothing to them and they said nothing to us, but I thought their conduct rather strange. In a few minutes they passed back, still riding very fast. Starks and I were riding in front and I told him I thought we had better stop the boys and ask them what they were up to. We galloped after them leaving the other men behind, and

when we had overtaken them and inquired the cause of their fast riding, they told us there was a gang of "Jayhawkers" in the neighborhood and they (the boys) were hiding their horses. While we were talking to the boys Starks left his mule standing at the roadside and stepped aside. I also alighted from my horse. There was a short curve in the road just in front of us and while in the position I have described, Jennison's regiment came dashing around the curve and right down upon us. Starks left his mule standing in the road and ran for his life out through the timber. I jumped on my horse and took the same course. They soon overtook Starks and shot and killed him. A band of them followed me shooting and calling "halt," but I only went the faster. I had gained a little on them by the time I came to a rail fence. It looked like they had me, but I had no idea of stopping. I threw off the top rail and made my horse jump the fence into a cornfield. They were at the fence in a moment firing and calling halt. I threw myself down on my horses's side in cowboy fashion, hanging on by leg and arm and sent him at his best speed down between two rows of corn. I soon came to a road where the corn gatherers had been hauling out the corn, and finding this better traveling and thinking it might lead to an outlet from the field I took it. They were still following and shooting at me. The fence where the road entered the field was up, but I had passed over one and could pass another. I held a tight reign and forced my horse to take it. He knocked off the top rail, but landed on his feet. Outside the field a firm road led down a long slant directly away from my pursuers. This gave me an advantage and I made good use of it. The soft ground of the cornfield checked their speed and the fence halted them, I think, for I never saw them any more. When my

horse reached the bottom of the slant and struck the level ground, the change of the surface threw him headlong. I went sailing in the air over beyond him carrying the bridle reins with me. Although terribly jolted I beat the horse up and was on his back the moment he could stand. I took no time to throw reins over his head, but with the rein swinging from my hand to the bit I pushed him into the brush and a half mile farther on before stopping.

My poor horse was almost dead, but as I could hear no one following me it looked like he had carried me to safety. I looked and listened intently but could neither see nor hear anyone. I got off my horse that he might get a better rest, as I did not know how soon he might have to run again, and after the first few breaths of freedom, began to think of my companions. As the main body of the regiment kept the traveled road and only a detachment followed me, it was certain that Billy and Culbertson and the old men would meet them. I feared for the result—especially to the old men. Billy and Culbertson I thought could likely take care of themselves. The point where I had stopped was at the head of a long ravine, and while standing there I saw a man approaching on horseback. I watched a moment and discovered that it was Bridgeman. We were rejoiced to see each other. Billy asked about Starks and I told him his fate. I asked how his party had fared. He said when they saw the soldiers coming he and Culbertson were in front. They fired at the soldiers and took to the brush. He had seen none of his companions since. By chance Billy had taken the same general direction that I had gone and that is how we happened to meet. We thought it almost providential.

I heard afterwards, but I cannot say as to the truth of the report, that the old gray haired men who were with us were all captured and killed. Whatever may have been their fate, we could do nothing for them against a regiment and counted ourselves more lucky than wise that we escaped with our own lives.

Billy and I remained in seclusion most of the day and then, hearing nothing of Culbertson and the old men, started on our journey. We rode leisurely along and reached Springfield without further difficulty. There we found Culbertson, waiting and looking for us. He was sly as a red fox and as hard to catch. He had gotten away from Jennison and had made better time to Springfield than we, and, as he knew our destination, waited our coming as proof that we had not been caught.

General Price was in winter quarters. We remained with our company a few weeks, and just before Christmas Billy and Jim Combs, his brother-in-law, and I got permission to spend the holidays at Granby with Jeff Whitney, Comb's step-father, who had formerly lived in Holt County. While on this visit Whitney, who was a man of considerable wealth, concluded he would move farther south in order to secure better protection for his family and property, and asked us to accompany him across the mountains as a guard. We consented to do it and made the trip with him over land to Fort Smith, where Whitney, after going just across the Arkansas line, erected a cabin in the Cherokee Nation. We remained with him about a week assisting him to get settled, when we got a letter from Colonel Gates informing us that a strong army was approaching from St. Louis and calling us back to our places in his company.

We set out for Springfield immediately and met our army as it retreated to join Van Dorn at Fayetteville. I shall always remember our meeting with this army. The ox teams were in front, four yoke to each wagon, a long string of them, winding slowly down the road. Then the mule teams, six mules to each wagon, many of them the same mules we had captured at Fort Scott. Next a regiment of soldiers, then General Price and his body guard, then the main body of the army with Gates in the rear. The pursuing army was making forced marches in an effort to bring on a general engagement before Price united his forces with Van Dorn. We had hardly joined our company, when the enemy, seeing that another day's march would place Price very close to Van Dorn, sent two regiments of cavalry to attack our rear. The first regiment came dashing upon us without warning, yelling and shooting. Gates ordered his men to dismount and take to the brush. They obeyed in an instant, leaving their horses in the road. The horses, frightened by the attack from the rear, stampeded and dashed forward upon the infantry. The attacking regiment followed, and before they realized their peril were far in between two lines of hidden Confederates who, protected by the brush, piled horses and soldiers thick along the road. There were but few left to tell the tale. The second regiment on discovering the situation of the first, failed to follow. Price, on discovering that the attack had been made sent a regiment of infantry back to support us, but when it arrived the work had been done. We came out of the brush and followed the infantry, still protecting the rear until our horses were sent back.

That was the last day of the retreat. Price took a stand at Cross Hollow where Van Dorn joined him. The Union army stopped at Pea Ridge. Both armies rested three days. On the night of the third day Price broke camp and traveled all night. By daylight he was in the road behind the enemy, and at sun up moved south toward their camp. We had not gone far when we met fifteen or twenty government teams going on a forage. They were greatly surprised, but grinned and said nothing. Price put a guard over them and moved on. When he got in position on the rear he fired a cannon as a signal to Van Dorn that all was ready. The engagement soon opened front and rear. Price was successful on his side, but Van Dorn was defeated. In less than an hour not a gun could be heard along the whole south side of the army. The whole force then turned upon Price and he was compelled to retreat. He went north until he came to a road leading across the mountains to White River. The Union forces did not follow and the retreat was made with little difficulty. We had no baggage except the artillery and the teams captured early in the morning. The roads, however, were very rough and our progress was very slow. On the following morning while we were toiling over the mountains, General Price rode by with his arm in a sling. The boys cheered him until the mountains resounded for miles. In a few days we were beyond danger of pursuit and made our way in safety to Fort Smith.

From Fort Smith Price was ordered to Memphis. He started at once over land to Des Arc on White River. From there we went to Memphis by boat. After

a short stay in Memphis, Brother James, who had returned from California and joined the army, was sent back to Missouri as a recruiting officer. Billy Bridgeman and I got leave to accompany him and we all came together back as far as Des Arc. There Billy decided to return to Memphis and go on with Price, while Brother James and I came home on horse back. This is the last time I ever saw Bridgeman.

CHAPTER XIII.

Home for Recruits.

I do not recall the incidents of the trip home. I do not remember the road or how we crossed the river or anything about it, though I have tried very hard to recall them. I only know that we went from Des Arc to Dover, Arkansas, and that somewhere on the road Henry Gibson and Harold Shultz joined us and that we all reached home together. Henry Gibson is dead. Schultz is insane and confined at State Hospital No. 2 at St. Joseph, and Brother James is in Idaho, so I have no way of refreshing my memory, and as the trip, although it covered nearly four hundred miles, was made forty-eight years ago, my foot steps have grown cold. It is more than probable that a single hint would rescue the entire journey and its incidents.

I recall events after we reached home with perfect distinctness. We remained out in the brush most of the time. Brother James, at such times as he could, met all those who wanted to join the army. Besides the boys on the east side of Platte River, he enlisted John and Wash Lynch, two of the Greenwood boys, Jack Smedley, Jim Reeves, William and John Reynolds and Richard Miller from the west side. In all there were some twenty-five or thirty. We secured a tent and pitched it in a secret place in what was then and now sometimes called "the hackle," about a mile east of Garrettsburg. We had scant provisions, some flour, sugar, coffee and bacon which we kept hanging in a tree. During the day we managed to partly satisfy our hunger on this diet, but at night we went out to see the girls and get good meals. In spite of the con-

stant fear of discovery, we had a good time. During all this time the boys were collecting guns and ammunition. These they got wherever they could. Most often from friends who gave or loaned them, but sometimes from a straggling soldier or militia man who was caught away from camp.

Everything was ready and the night fixed for our departure. Doc. Watson had informed us that there was a company of militia camped in his yard about three miles distant from our camp, cooking, eating and sleeping on his blue grass. Our plan was to march up near them during the night and wake them at daybreak and bid them goodby. During the entire time our camp remained there, we took no pains to conceal it from the negroes, for the most of them—and we thought all—could be trusted as far as our white friends. We made a mistake in one of them. He turned traitor and told the company at Doc Watson's that about two hundred "bush-whackers" were camped in the Hackle. They informed the authorities at St. Joe and the night before we proposed to execute our plans they marched two regiments—one infantry and one cavalry—down close to our camp and next morning surprised us by calling about sun up. It was clear they had a guide for they followed the trail through the thick woods directly to the tent.

The tent was stretched in a little valley and over beyond a deep gulch, so that it was impossible to approach nearer than fifty yards of it on horseback. This was too close to be comfortable to the eight men who were in it sound asleep. Without a moment's warning they fired into it. The aim was high and not a man was hit. They jumped and ran for their lives and all escaped. It was our good fortune that more of the boys were not in the tent. As it was to be the last

night at home, most of the boys had gone to bid their friends goodby and had remained with them for the night. Brother James and I had gone home with Charley Pullins, who had joined our company, and, in place of returning to the tent, we all took our blankets and slept in his rye field.

Early next morning we were awakened by the barking of Pullins' dog. We jumped up and looked and listened. A regiment of infantry was passing along the road. They had a six gun battery with them and I could not mistake the creaking of the old truck-wheels. We picked up our blankets and ran to the house and threw them in at the back window, and then stepped around in front to watch them go by, some two hundred yards distant. We had no idea they were after us with all this equipment, but supposed they were simply marching from Easton to St. Joe and had probably missed the road. We knew nothing of the attack upon the tent, nor did we know that at that moment the cavalry regiment had divided into squads and was galloping from house to house all over the neighborhood, looking for the Gibson boys.

While we stood watching the procession pass we heard a rumbling noise behind us, and back of the house. I turned and saw the cavalry coming under lash. We ran for the front gate which led away from the infantry that was passing. A few rods beyond the gate lay a heavy body of timber and we made for it. As I went out I passed my fine saddle mare grazing in the yard, and I threw the yard gate wide open. By this time the soldiers had galloped around both sides of the house and commenced firing at us. At the first shot my mare threw up her head and tail and made for the gate. She was safe in the timber almost as soon as we were. When we reached

the timber bullets were flying after us pretty thick, but I stopped and threw my double barrel shot gun to my shoulder. Brother James called to me to save my loads, but as we each had two six shooters and a double barrel shot gun, I thought I could spare one load so I gave it to them. They, like all soldiers at that time, were dreadfully afraid of the brush, and, whether it was my shot or the fact that we had reached the timber, they stopped firing and started around to the farther side of the woods. I lost sight of Pullins and James, and when I saw the soldiers start around the timber I ran back towards the house and into a cornfield on the opposite side. When I reached the fence at the farther side of the cornfield, I ran directly upon two of the infantry soldiers who had apparently become lost from the regiment. They were as much, if not more surprised than I was, for I had presence of mind enough to use the remaining load in my shot gun and they tore through the brush like wild deer.

I went up to the tent expecting to find the boys there. Instead, I found the tent riddled with bullets and several old guns which the soldiers had destroyed by hammering the barrels around a tree. I was, of course, greatly surprised, but after looking over the situation I was gratified at finding no evidence that any of our men had been killed. I learned afterwards that but one man had been killed in the whole raid. That man was George Reynolds. After the attack upon the tent the soldiers rode over to Reynold's house and found him, an old gray haired man, carrying a basket of corn to his hogs. They shot him where he stood and rode off and left him for the women of his family to bury, as the men in the community didn't dare come

out of the brush to their assistance. One man, Rich Miller, who knew of his death, ventured out and helped bury him.

The raid scattered our little band of volunteers and all hope of gathering them together was abandoned. On the evening after the raid my saddle mare —the one I had let out through the gate at Pullins', after remaining in the woods all day, came up to the gate at the old home, as though she knew—and I believe she did—that it was not safe for her to be seen on the road in daylight. During the night that followed I located Brother James and he, Pullins and I decided to go back into the Confederate lines. Within a day or two we left expecting, as upon our preceding trip, to cross the river at Richfield. We passed through old Haynesville on the line between Clinton and Clay Counties, which was then a thriving village, but which I am told is now abandoned as a town, and then on directly toward the river. There was considerable Union sentiment about Haynesville and some one there must have suspected our purpose and informed a company of militia that happened to be in the neighborhood. We rode leisurely along, not suspecting that we were being followed, and, when we reached the home of Reuben J. Eastin, some six miles south of Haynesville, stopped for dinner. Eastin was related to Pullins and the family were all glad to see us, and invited us into the house and the old gentleman directed his son to take our horses to the barn and feed them. I told him we had better go to the brush and feed our horses and have our meals sent to us. He said there was no danger as there were no soldiers in the community.

We all pulled off our belts and threw them, with the navies in them on a bed and prepared for dinner.

As I stepped across the room to a looking glass to comb my hair, I glanced out the door and saw a company of militia coming up the road from the north under whip. Brother and I sprang for our navies and buckled them around us and ran out at the back door and into a corn field, which was on the south side of the house. Pullins, who was not accustomed to warfare, was so frightened that he forgot his guns. It was August and the weather was very hot. We ran down between two rows of corn as fast as we could, Pullins in front, Brother James behind him and I in the rear. I got hot and called to them not to run so fast, but they did not hear me and kept going. I stopped and sat down. I could then hear the horses galloping around to the farther or south side of the field, so I turned and ran east toward the main road which ran in front of the house, and along the east side of the field. When I got to the fence I looked both directions and saw no soldiers. They had evidently anticipated that we would all make for the heavy timber which lay south and west of the field, and had undertaken to head us off in that direction. There was a woods pasture just across the road, with only large trees in it, but I saw beyond the timber a thicket which seemed to skirt a draw or gully and I made up my mind to cross the road and take my chances. I remember thinking that if I should be discovered while crossing the open pasture there would probably be no more than four or five men in the squad and that I could get behind a big tree and wait until they came close to me, when with my skill in the use of the navy, I could protect myself against them. I jumped over the fence and made good speed, taking no time to look back, until I reached the thicket. Not a man of them saw me. They had left a gap open, and I was out of the trap. I followed the brushy ra-

vine some distance and came to another cornfield. In passing through this field I came upon a water melon patch, completely surrounded by the corn. I decided this would be a good place to stop and wait for developments. I took a big ripe melon out into the corn and proceeded to supply as much as possible the dinner the soldiers had caused me to lose. I knew I was safe, but I was not so sure about my companions. In a few minutes I heard two pistol shots. They were from Brother James' navy. I had heard the report too many times to be mistaken. This assured me that he had not at that moment been captured. In about five minutes I heard two musket shots, and this alarmed me. I felt perfectly sure if they had fired at Brother James they had not harmed him and he had escaped without returning the fire, but I could not be so sure about Pullins as I knew he had no weapons with him. No further shots were fired.

I remained in the corn field until nearly night and then started for the home of my sister, Mrs. Wilson, who lived about three miles north and east. I reached her house about nine o'clock at night, but did not go in. She brought food to me in the timber near by and remained with me waiting and watching for Brother James and Pullins. We were both very uneasy and greatly feared they had been captured. We knew either or both of them, if alive and not captured, would come to her house to find me before attempting to go on to the south. About midnight Brother James came in. He knew nothing of Pullins. We watched for him all night but he never came. Next morning Mrs. Wilson saddled her horse and rode over to Eastin's to see if she could hear of him. When she returned she told us they had captured Pullins and taken him to Liberty. The last word Pullins' young wife had said to me as we left

home, was, "Take good care of Charley." There was little that could be done for him now, but in the hope that we might be able to do something, or that, as he was a perfectly innocent boy, making his way south for safety, he would be paroled and released and allowed to return to his home. We remained in the brush a week waiting for him. During this time Brother James gave me a full account of his escape.

He said when he and Pullins reached the south side of the corn field they could hear the horses coming and decided it would not be safe to attempt to get out into the timber, so they put back into the field and became separated. In a short time men were all around the field and in the field riding through the tall corn. When James discovered that men were in the field he crouched down beneath a bush and remained perfectly quiet in order that he might hear the approach of the horses through the rattling corn. He had remained in this position but a short time when he saw a single horseman coming toward him. He drew his navy and lay still. When the man got very close he arose and shot him in the leg. He then shot his horse and ran. He could easily have killed the man, but did not want to do it. At the sound of these guns all the pursuers started in the direction of the supposed fight. James heard them coming and decided to go back toward the house in the hope of finding it unguarded. In that case he would secure his horse. When he got to the fence near the barn he set his foot upon a rail and raised his body to look. At that moment he saw two soldiers on guard and they saw him. They raised their guns to fire, but James threw up his hands and said, "Don't shoot." They thought he had surrendered and dropped their guns. In the twinkle of an eye he fell back off of the fence and put back into the

heavy corn. The soldiers both fired at him but he had the fence as a shield and their shots were harmless. The guards then yelled, "Here he is," and the remainder of the soldiers in the field and out supposing the musket shots had killed one or more of us, all galloped for the barn. James heard them going from all directions and kept close watch that none who were in the field might come near enough to see him. When they were all well on toward the barn he made quick time back through the field and into the woods beyond. He had not gone far in the timber when he heard them coming again, and, as he was almost worn out and feared he would not be able to get out of reach of them he climbed a tree that had thick foliage upon it and remained there the whole afternoon. He could hear the soldiers riding around the field and through the corn and in the timber near him. When night came they gave up the search, and James climbed down and made his way to Mrs. Wilson's.

By the end of a week we had the full story of Pullins' fate. They had taken him to Liberty and there pretended to try him, found him guilty, but of what crime no record will ever show and no man will ever know, sent him back to old man Eastin's, where he was shot by twelve men. They then plundered Eastin's house, took his horses, harness and wagons, bedding and table ware, provisions and everything movable and moved him, a blind and helpless cripple, out of his house and under the trees of his orchard, set fire to his house and burned it to the ground.

We could do nothing but go on, so with sad hearts and without horses or blankets, with nothing but our trusted navies and plenty of ammunition, we skulked our way to old Richfield again, some fifteen miles from Mrs. Wilson's. We reached the river just about dark

and lay in the bluffs all night, without food or shelter. Early in the morning we ventured down to a house and asked for breakfast. We knew by the way we were received that he was a southern man, but we were too cautious to make our wishes known at once. By the time breakfast was over we decided we could trust him, so we asked him if he knew of any way we could get across the river. He told us there was a man on the other side of the river who had a skiff and made a business of setting southern men across, but he was very cautious and would not come to this side except upon a signal. We then asked him if he would assist us and he said he would, but we must be very careful to evade the northern soldiers on guard and not let them see him as if they suspected him they would probably kill him and burn his home. We assured him that we were discreet, so he went with us. He took us a short distance above Richfield and into a timbered bottom, and when we got to the road which paralleled the river he told us to stop and wait for him. He passed across the road and out into the willows that grew between the road and the water. While we stood waiting a man and woman approached through the timber from the west singing Dixie at the top of their voices. We knew this was a ruse to deceive just such men as ourselves. Federal soldiers were so near that no sincere southern person would sing Dixie at the top of his voice within their hearing. We ran back into the timber and lay down behind a log. The couple passed, still singing, and went on toward the town. In a few minutes our man came back. We left our hiding place and followed him to the river. The man was there with his boat waiting for us. We jumped in. Our friend shoved the boat from shore and put back into the willows. Our boatman told us that soldiers both

above and below the town had been trying to get him to come across all morning, but they did not know his signal and he would not come.

Our man in crossing towards us had taken a course which kept his boat out of view, and as he went back he kept behind an island until well toward his own shore and out of range. As the boat passed out from behind the island they discovered us and commenced shooting, but we were too far away to fear their bullets.

We landed safely and then, having passed over what was considered our greatest difficulty, began to think about other troubles still ahead. Independence was full of Federal soldiers. Lone Jack and Pleasant Hill were no better. Roving bands of foragers and scouts kept the country between closely patroled. We had but one hope and that was that we might chance to fall in with Quantrell on one of his raids. William Hill, a cousin of ours, lived near Pleasant Hill, and if we could reach him, we felt sure he could tell us when Quantrell might be expected in that locality. We left the river and walked cautiously through timber and fields, stopping at farm houses for food only after night, sleeping on the ground without blankets and finally reached Hill's place. He was at heart a strong southern man, but had managed to deceive the Union soldiers and his Union neighbors. We asked about Quantrell. He informed us that some of his neighbors belonged to Quantrell's band, and that Quantrell was at that time in camp about three miles away. We did not know Quantrell nor any of his men and asked Hill to go with us to the camp. He objected. Said that he had acted the part of a northern man so completely that Quantrell had threatened him, believing him to be in earnest. We told him if he went with us he would have

nothing to fear. He seemed not to understand how this could be if we knew neither Quantrell nor his men. We then explained that Jesse and Frank James were with Quantrell and that they lived in Clay County near the home of our sister, and were well acquainted with us by reputation.

Hill finally consented and saddled horses for all and took us to the camp. He introduced us to Quantrell and then in turn we met Frank and Jesse James, Cole Younger and his brothers and other leaders of the company. We explained Hill's relation to us; that we had known him from his birth in Tennessee and that he was with us at heart. They told him to go home and fear nothing from them. Hill took his horses and left well satisfied.

The whole company remained in camp some days, and during the time one of Hill's neighbors gave Brother James a fine mare, bridle and saddle. I have always thought that Hill furnished the money for this equipment and gave it in the name of a trusted neighbor. It was not long until a fine outfit was presented to me. I took it and said nothing. I liked the horse, but did not like the saddle. It was an old dragoon government saddle with brass mounted horns both before and behind.

About this time a detachment of Shelby's men came north on a scout. Quantrell joined them and attacked Pleasant Hill and drove the Union forces to Lone Jack. He followed and defeated them at Lone Jack and drove them out of that section of the country.

We returned to Pleasant Hill and were received with great cordiality by the people. The women baked cakes and pies and sent them into camp, which were fully appreciated. At the pay office which had been maintained by the Federal officers we found

large quantities of greenbacks of small denominations lying on desks and tables and scattered upon the floor. It was counted of little value at that time and in that community. One dollar of Confederate money was worth five of the governments' greenbacks.

After a rest, the scouting parties that had joined Quantrell in the attack upon Pleasant Hill and Lone Jack, started south. Quantrell traveled with us about three days, and I seriously contemplated joining that band and remaining in Missouri. I mentioned the matter to Brother James and he discouraged the idea. He said winter was coming on and the camp equipment was inadequate, besides he preferred that I should go into the regular service. I took his advice, and have since had many reasons to be thankful to him for it. We finally reached a place in Arkansas called Horsehead, where winter quarters had been established. At that time I did not belong to the army, as my term of enlistment had expired, but at Horsehead I enlisted for three years, or during the war. My horse, saddle and bridle belonged to me, hence my enlistment was in the cavalry. During the early part of the winter the officers decided that as horse feed was so scarce, the horses should be sent into Texas to graze through the winter, promising that each man's horse should be restored to him in the spring. I parted with my horse reluctantly, but of course, after enlistment had to obey orders. I never saw him again and when spring came I was compelled to enter the infantry. Brother James and many others were in the same condition.

We were assigned to a company of Missouri troops. Our captain's name was Miller. His home was in northeast Missouri. Our first lieutenant's name was Miller also, and his home was in Burr Oak Bottom, Kansas.

The first business in the spring was the guarding of the line across Arkansas from Fort Smith to Helena. We had our portion and did our work. Later General Holmes was given command and marched us across the state and, I have always thought, very foolishly attacked the fortifications at Helena. The river was full of gunboats and if he had been successful he could not have held the place. He was repulsed, however, and his troops badly cut up. The Missouri troops declared they would serve no longer under Holmes. Whether for this or some other reason, he was removed and command given to General Drayton.

I do not remember that Drayton did anything but keep us lying in camp, drilling every day, with now and then a dress parade, with all the women and children in the country invited to come and see us. This was very distasteful to us. We felt that we were not there to be raced around over the hot sand in the hot sun just to be looked at. Aside from this we had a pretty good time cock-fighting, horse racing and playing seven-up for tobacco.

General Price came back to us about Christmas and the Missouri boys planned a great celebration. Christmas day about five hundred took their guns and marched around to the headquarters of each colonel and made him treat or take a bumping against a tree. We then marched up to General Drayton's headquarters. His negro cooks and waiters were getting supper. They were soon cleared away and the general was called out. He backed up against a tree as though he expected to be shot, but he soon found we were only bent upon a little fun. The boys produced their fiddles and set to playing. Then they sang and danced and now and then we fired a volley just to make the woods ring. The General seemed to enjoy the fun and

told the boys to play on the bones. One quickly replied that we had been playing on bones all winter and pretty dry bones, too. The General saw the joke and smiled good-naturedly.

We next moved up and took possession of a six-gun battery. The muskets were not noisy enough. The first round brought Drayton. He ordered us to stop, but we told him it was Christmas and paid no attention to him. He sent for General Price, and as the General and his body guard rode up we ceased firing and set to waving hats and cheering. "Pap," as we called General Price, told us we could have our Christmas fun but we must not disturb the battery. That was enough. We always did what "Pap" told us to do. If he said fight we fought, and when he said run we ran.

It was too early to stop the fun, so we decided to go over and see the Arkansas boys who were camped about two miles away. We found on arriving that the boys who wore straps on their shoulders had organized a dance in a big tent and invited the girls for miles around. The dance was in full swing. The guards around the tent halted us and asked if we had a pass. We said "Yes, this is Christmas," and passed on. We made no noise or disturbance, but walked quietly up around the tent, and each man cut himself a window so he could look in on the scene. The shoulder straps were furious and came swarming out like hornets. We laughed at them and told them to go on with the dance, but they would not do it and sent for General Price. We learned this and started back, and met the General going toward the Arkansas camp and cheered him wildly. He passed on and said nothing, though I am sure he knew we were the boys he was after. We went into camp and nothing was ever said about our frolic.

CHAPTER XIV.

War in Arkansas.

Some time early in the year 1863, Price moved his forces to Little Rock. The Federal forces under General Steele approached from Springfield, and Price began preparations to receive them. His army was much inferior to the attacking force and every precaution was taken to give us the advantage. We crossed to the north side of the river from Little Rock and dug a trench in the shape of a rainbow touching the river above and below the town and more than a mile in length. The enemy approached within two miles of our trench and halted and remained in that position nearly a week. We had little rest during that time. The drum tapped every morning at four o'clock and we had to crawl out and fall into our ditch, where we remained until the danger of an early morning attack was over and then got out for breakfast.

On the seventh day, if I remember correctly, the Federals broke camp and marched ten miles down the river and commenced building a pontoon bridge. Price sent his cavalry and artillery down to visit them, but the fire was not heavy enough and the bridge was built in spite of their best efforts. We were called out of our trenches in the meantime and taken across the river on a foot bridge built upon small boats. When we reached Little Rock I was surprised to find everything gone. Ox teams and mule teams were strung out for miles hauling our freight and army supplies. We marched behind with orders to protect the train and I

thought we would certainly be attacked, but we were not. Steele made Little Rock his headquarters for the summer.

About fifty miles south of Little Rock we went into camp. At that time I belonged to Clark's brigade. Mercer was our Colonel, Gaines our major and Miller our captain. Clark's division was ordered to go down on the Mississippi River below the mouth of the Arkansas and destroy steam boats that were carrying supplies from St. Louis to Vicksburg. The siege was going on at that time, and the Federal troops were being supplied with provision largely by way of the river. There were two regiments in the division and we had with us a six gun battery. We reached the river and concealed ourselves at a point where the current approached close to the west bank, judging, by the low stage of the river, that the boats would be compelled to follow the current. We had not been in hiding very long until we saw seven boats steaming their way down the river with a small gunboat trailing along behind as guard or convoy. When the foremost boat reached a point near the shore and directly opposite us, it was halted and ordered ashore. There were soldiers on the boat and they ran out on deck and fired at us. We returned the fire and cleared the deck the first round. The next round was from our battery. The range was easy and one ball struck her boilers. The hot water and steam flew in every direction. She headed for the farther shore and drifted on a sand bar. The soldiers leaped from the boat and swam for their lives.

The six other boats received very much the same treatment. They were all disabled and sunk or drifted helplessly down the river. The little gunboat was helpless also. When the attack began it was under a bank and had to steam back up the river before it could get

in range to shoot at us. When the little bull dog got back in range it threw shot and shell into the timber like a hail storm, but our work had been done and we were out and gone. The volley fired from the deck of the first boat wounded one man, John Harper, in the knee. That was our only damage.

We then went some fifteen miles farther down and from the levee crippled two more transports. From there we followed the levee until we could hear the big guns at Vicksburg. That was July 3d, 1863. Next day about noon the heavy artillery ceased and we soon learned that Pemberton had surrendered. On July 5th cavalry sent across the river from Vicksburg were scouring the Arkansas side of the river, looking for "bushwhackers who had cannon with them." We fled back into the pine knobs and escaped easily.

I have been unable to recall further active service in 1863. We remained inactive and in camp most of the time and the monotonous life failed to impress its small events upon my memory.

Active operations in 1864 began, as well as I recall, about the first of March, when Steele left his station at Little Rock and started for Shreveport. We understood that his army numbered forty thousand men. It was certainly much larger than Price's army. As soon as it was learned that Steele had started south Price broke camp and set out to meet him, not with the idea of entering into an engagement, but for the purpose of harassing and delaying him. I do not remember where the two armies first came in contact with each other, but I recall distinctly the weeks of scouting, marching here and there, skirmishing now and then with detachments of Steele's army, and retreating when reinforcements appeared. The infantry kept always in front, resisting progress at every point, while the

cavalry under Marmaduke and Shelby went to the rear and threatened the long train of supplies. They made dashing attacks upon the line at every available point, fighting only long enough to force Steele to prepare for battle and then rapidly retreating. In this way Steele's men were kept on the run, forward to fight the infantry and backward to resist the cavalry. At night our men would frequently push a battery up near his camp and throw shells in upon him all night. I do not know how fast Steele traveled, but he must have considered five miles a day good progress.

During this time Banks was approaching Shreveport up Red River with sixty thousand men, and the object was to prevent a union of these forces. Eight gunboats were also making their way up the river.

General Dick Taylor had about ten thousand Texas and Louisiana troops and he was resisting the approach of Banks. As I remember it, Taylor had risked several engagements with Banks, but had been compelled to fall back each time. Finally he sent to Price for help. Price decided to employ his cavalry upon Steele so he sent his infantry, about five thousand, to Taylor. That included me, as my horse had never been brought back from pasture in Texas.

We made a forced march of one hundred and fifty miles to Shreveport, and then hurried down Red River to Sabine Cross Roads. We joined Taylor and on the eighth day of April attacked Banks and defeated him. He retreated to Pleasant Hill. After the battle we took a few hours' rest, and when night came Taylor ordered us to cook one day's rations ahead. About nine o'clock we were ordered out and placed like blood hounds upon Bank's tracks. They were easy to follow. The tracks were fresh, blood was plentiful and dead and wounded negroes lay now and then alongside the

road. We marched all night and until twelve o'clock next day. About that hour we came to a small stream about two miles from Pleasant Hill. There we stopped and had a drink and ate a lunch.

About two o'clock in the afternoon we were thrown into battle line and ordered to march on to Pleasant Hill. Banks had received reinforcements and was waiting for us. We passed through a body of timber and there encountered the Zouaves who were hid behind trees. One of them shot and killed our cook, Al St. John, who was from Platte County, Missouri. This was a bad start for us, but we routed the Zouaves and marched on through the timber to an open cotton field which lay between us and Pleasant Hill. When we passed out of the timber we could see the town and Bank's army lying in gullies and behind fences waiting for us.

When we got within range firing began. I do not remember which side opened, but I know the fight was open and in earnest. Our line was about a mile long and for a time each side stood firm. Directly I heard a yell up at the north end of our line. It was too indistinct to be understood and for a time I did not comprehend it, but it came closer and closer by regiments one after the other until our regiment was ordered to charge. Then we took up the yell and dashed forward. The yell passed on down the line until our whole force was on the move. We routed the enemy and drove them back into the city where some of them crept under old out houses to escape the bayonet. Then our line came to a stop. Their reinforcements came in from the rear with a yell and went after us. It looked like the whole sixty thousand had suddenly sprung from the earth. We thought we had gained a great victory when really we had only driven in the pickets. As

they came the yell went up on the other side. We stood right there and tried to whip the whole army. We stopped the yell but had to go. As we turned to go back I saw a battery horse running across the battle ground with his harness on and his entrails dragging the ground. Several other horses were running with saddles on their sides, showing their riders had been shot and in falling had turned the saddles. Those horses were all killed by bullets from one side or the other before they got off the battlefield.

We fell back about two hundred yards and rallied and made a second attack. By that time Banks was moving away from us. When the guns ceased sufficiently to enable me to hear the report of my own gun, I could hear also Bank's baggage and trap wagons rattling and banging out of Pleasant Hill. They went like a cyclone and that ended the bloody battle. We marched back two miles to the little creek where we had stopped at noon for lunch and camped for the night. Next morning Taylor's cavalry started in pursuit and saw Banks safely back to New Orleans. There Banks lost his job. At the same time the cavalry started in pursuit of Banks, the infantry began a forced march to Shreveport to meet Price and Steele. When we reached Shreveport neither Price nor Steele had arrived and we did not halt, but continued on toward Little Rock. About forty miles back on the road we came upon Price camped by the roadside, with Steele penned up in Camden, a town on the Ouachita River. Steele had gone into an evacuated Confederate fort to allow his army to rest, and Price had surrounded him except upon the side next the river. It was about two o'clock in the afternoon when our forces joined Price. The boys were all well and in fine spirits

and had many things to tell us and were greatly interested in our experience on the Mississippi and at Pleasant Hill.

About five o'clock in the afternoon Price rolled two guns up on a hill and fired a few shots into Steele's camp, but got no answer. He ceased firing and nothing more was done that night. Next morning Steele and his whole army were gone, and the bridge across the river was burned. A temporary bridge was hurriedly built and the infantry crossed and started in pursuit. We followed all day and all night and overtook them about ten o'clock the following morning. I understood that our cavalry had followed by forced marches also and had gone ahead of Steele. At any rate, Steele, in place of following the main road, switched off and went about three miles down into the Saline River bottom. The river was very high and all the sloughs and ditches were full of water. When we came up Steele was throwing his pontoon bridge over the river and his forces were digging ditches and felling trees to keep us back until they could get across.

Marmaduke made the first attack, as I remember, and charged the rude breast-works. He drove the troops behind them back into the level bottom and there the Arkansas infantry was set to work. They forced the line gradually back toward the river, and after an hour's fighting we were sent to relieve them. Our attack began about twelve o'clock in a pouring rain. They would make desperate stands behind rail fences and in clumps of timber and we sometimes had hard work to dislodge them. When driven from one point they would immediately take up another. This would force us to maneuver through the mud and water to get at them again. The last strong resistance was made about four o'clock in the afternoon. The forces fighting us

had managed to get into a body of timber on the north side of an open cotton field. A high rail fence separated the field from the timber and this fence made excellent breast works. In charging we were compelled to cross the field exposed to their fire. We made a run and when about half across the bullets came so thick we could go no further. We were ordered to lie down. Every man dropped on his face with his head toward the enemy. Lying in this position we fired upon them and turned upon our backs to reload. We fought in this fashion until Taylor's infantry relieved us.

When Taylor's fresh troops dashed over us with a yell the forces behind the fence wavered and finally ran, but it was then about time for them to run. They had held us until most of the army had crossed the river. They then made their escape and cut the pontoon bridge behind them. We secured most of their heavy guns as they had to keep them back to use on us. The battle was ended and I was glad of it. I never passed a more dreadful day. With rain pouring down from above, with sloughs waist deep to wade, and with mud ankle deep over the whole battle field our condition may be easily imagined. Besides this we were black as negroes when we went into camp. In biting off the ends of our paper cartridges the loose powder would stick to our wet faces and become smeared over them. Our gun sticks were black with exploded powder, and in handling them with wet hands we became completely covered with grime. I shall never forget the sorry looking, miserable, muddy, rain soaked and bedraggled soldiers that came into camp that night.

We were not the only men who suffered that day. While we were lying on the field, Price ordered a battery to our assistance. The captain pulled his battery down the road and ran into a negro regiment concealed

in the timber. The battery boys dismounted and were getting ready for business when the negroes charged and captured the battery. About half the company swam a slough and got away. The other half were taken prisoners. They had no sooner laid down their arms than the negroes shot and killed them all. As we lay upon the field we could see and hear but little, but this massacre occurred in plain view from where we lay. As soon as we were relieved a portion of our forces immediately attacked the negro regiment and without mercy killed and wounded about half of them and recaptured the guns; but the negroes had shot the horses and that rendered the guns useless.

Next day I was detailed to help bury the dead. Several large wagons were provided with six mules and a driver to each wagon. Four men to each wagon loaded the bodies in. The end gate was taken out of the bed. Two men stood on each side of a body. One on each side held an arm and one each side a leg. The second swing the body went in head foremost. When the wagon was full it was driven off to where another squad had prepared a long trench into which the bodies were thrown and covered up. It required most of the day to complete our work.

The wounded were removed from the field and cared for temporarily as they fell. The flight of the Federal forces made it impossible for them to care for their wounded immediately, so they were taken up by our men and given such attention as we could give them.

Next day was the doctors' day. I was ordered to go along and assist. Three doctors went together, and over each wounded man they held a consultation. If two of them said amputate, it was done at once. When they came to a man with a wound on his head

they would smile and say, "We had better not amputate in this case." It seemed to me they made many useless amputations.

One doctor carried a knife with a long thin blade. He would draw this around the limb and cut the flesh to the bone. The second had a saw with which he sawed the bone. The third had a pair of forceps with which he clasped the blood vessels, and a needle with which he sewed the skin over the wound.

The first man I saw them work upon was a Union soldier. All three said his leg must come off. They began administering chloroform, but he was a very hard subject and fought it bitterly. They asked me to hold his head, and I did so. As soon as he was quiet they went to work on him. When I saw how they cut and slashed I let his head loose. I thought if he wanted to wake up and fight them he should have a fair chance. I told the doctors that I did not go to war to hold men while they butchered them; that I had done all to that man that my contract called for and that I thought he was well paid for his trip. I was in real earnest about it, but the doctors laughed at me and said they would soon teach me to be a surgeon.

CHAPTER XV.

Back Into Missouri.

I have no distinct recollection of leaving the camp on Saline River, nor do I recall the military operations that followed the battle I have just described. I know that Steele went on south and that Price did not follow him. Steele and Banks were both well out of the country, and it is probable that we passed a few weeks of idleness and inactivity. At all events, my memory, upon which I depend entirely, fails to account for the events immediately following the experience I have related, and my next vivid recollection begins at White River, where we were swimming our horses across on our march back into Missouri. Price, Shelby and Marmaduke were all together. We passed through Dover, a little town where John H. Bennett, a cousin of mine, who was captain of one of our companies, lived and thence on to Ironton.

There we found about two thousand government troops, well fortified just north of town, in a little valley at the foot of a mountain. They came out and met us two miles from Ironton where we had a skirmish and they went back into their den. We marched into town and camped. It was reported among the soldiers that Price was having ladders made with which to scale the walls, but I did not believe it. Such an attack would have been successful in all probability, but it would have cost Price many men and I was sure he had none to spare. Toward night he had two field pieces rolled up on top of the mountain by hand and began to drop shells into their camp. They had neglected to fortify the heavens above them and Price was taking advan-

tage of their neglect. When a shell dropped into camp you could see them running away in every direction looking for a place to hide.

Some time in the night they broke through our picket line and marched ten miles to a railroad station where they were loaded upon flat cars and taken to St. Louis. Price continued on toward St. Louis and greatly alarmed that city. Troops were hurried from east and west to its defense, but Price had no such plan. His sole idea was to threaten and draw troops from other places to its protection.

On the way up from Ironton we captured two or three hundred militia at every county seat. For all that could be guessed from his actions, Price intended to march directly into Jefferson City, but shortly before he reached there he turned to the west and went to Boonville. There he captured quite a large force of Federal troops and a steam ferry boat. Marmaduke with his brigade crossed the river and marched up the north side toward Glasgow, while Price and Shelby kept to the south side. Price put a guard on the boat and compelled the crew to run it up the river in conjunction with his forces. At Glasgow we captured something like a thousand troops. Marmaduke then recrossed the river and joined Price.

At Glasgow Lieutenant Evans got permission for himself and twenty-five men to return to Buchanan County to see their friends. I was one of the twenty-five. From Glasgow we went to Keytesville where we met Bill Anderson, the noted "Bushwhacker," with about one hundred men. Anderson and his men accompanied us to Brunswick, where we learned that there were about three hundred militia at Carrollton. Anderson said they were dreadfully afraid of "bushwhackers," and that he believed the twenty-five of us

could run them out of town, but he sent fifteen of his men with us. We left Brunswick in the night and at four o'clock next morning were a mile north of Carrollton. There we stopped to wait for daylight. When it began to grow light we all rode together until we encountered the pickets. As soon as they saw us they turned and galloped into town as fast as their horses could carry them without firing a shot. This enabled us to get into the town before any alarm was given, as our horses were as fast as those ridden by the pickets. We rode in with a whoop and a yell, dismounted and got behind a fence. The fifteen bushwhackers ran around to the west side of town in plain view of the militia camp and commenced firing. Lieutenant Evans sent a man asking them to surrender. The colonel asked who the attacking force was. The man told him it was Jo Shelby. The colonel sent word back that he would surrender in one hour. Evans returned the messenger with directions to the Colonel that if he did not surrender in five minutes he would open the artillery upon him. The colonel decided to surrender and marched his men out into an open place and had them stack arms and march away to a safe distance. We closed in and immediately took possession of the arms and marched the Federals into the court house and locked them up. They had surrendered believing we were merely the detachment detailed to come and receive the surrnder and were greatly chagrined when they found that we constituted the entire force that had attacked them. It was all over by six o'clock in the morning.

We cooked our breakfast upon their fires and out of their provisions. The town took a holiday, as it was strongly southern in sentiment, and so did we. In

the afternoon we engaged all the barbers in town, and as we were coming back home to see our girls we had considerable shopping to do.

The ferry boat, still under order of General Price, had come up the river and we sent a messenger down to stop it, and late in the evening marched our prisoners down and loaded them on. We also hauled along all the provisions, guns and equipment and sent the whole across to Price.

Anderson's men left us and returned to Brunswick, and we camped for the night on Waukenda Creek, two miles west of Carrollton. Early next morning we moved on and by noon were in the hills north of Richmond and at night were in camp at Watkins' woolen mills in Clay County, two miles east of the home of my sister, whom I have fequently mentioned. Watkins gave us a cordial welcome, dressed a shoat and a sheep and brought them out to us and otherwise showed us many kindnesses. Next day we visited Mrs. Wilson and the following day completed our journey and camped in the brush in Tremont Township.

Everything seemed quiet, but we observed great discretion and did not venture from camp in the daytime. After remaining on the east side of Platte for about ten days without being molested, we crossed the river and camped in the hills along Pigeon Creek. Wall Brinton, Harvey and Bennett Reece, George Berryhill, and Joe, Bill and John Evans, boys in our party, all lived on that side of the river. Our camp remained there some two weeks without being molested. During the time we captured three soldiers a few miles west of Agency. They were on picket, sent out from St. Joseph, and in patroling the road came very close to our camp. As we did not need any

pickets we took them in. One of them volunteered to join us, and as we knew him we allowed him to do so and to keep his gun. The other two were kept prisoners and their guns given to Bennett Reece and Harvey McCanse, two recruits, who had joined us.

Shortly after this our camp was moved back to the east side of the Platte and located in the bluffs near the home of Joab Shultz. Here we remained in seclusion, keeping the captured pickets as prisoners to prevent them from returning to St. Joseph and disclosing that we were in the country. We had little difficulty in keeping our presence from the knowledge of Penick and his men, as most of the residents of the community were our friends. Bad luck, however, befell us. John Utz and Billy Jones, hearing that we were at home and desiring to go south with us on our return, came to my old home to ascertain our whereabouts. My sister, who lived on the place, would tell them nothing but referred them to James Jeffreys. Instead of going to James Jeffreys, they went to George Jeffreys, a strong Union man, and asked him if he knew where Gibson and Brinton were. Jeffreys replied that he did not know they were in the country. Jones said, "Yes, they are here with twenty-five or thirty men." Failing to learn of us from Jeffreys they returned to the home of my sister, where, during their absence, Cousin Margaret Gibson had arrived, and as she knew Utz and Jones, told them how to find us.

George Jeffreys, that "good Union man," lost no time in communicating with Penick, for next day all roads were full of soldiers. Cousin Margaret Gibson came running to our camp and told us the soldiers were looking for us. We released our prisoners and started. When well out on the road we agreed upon a meeting place and separated, thus leaving each man to look out

for himself and at the same time taking responsibility for any one else off of each man. This was thought to be wise, as our little band was no match for the enemy, bue the enemy were not acquainted with the by paths through the woods and brush, and by going singly we were at liberty to dodge to better advantage. Jones and Utz came to join us shortly after we broke camp, and undertook to follow. Penick's men caught them and made them prisoners.

Every man showed up at the meeting place a mile below Agency. There we crossed to the west side of the river and stopped for a hasty lunch and to see if we were being followed. Seeing nothing of the enemy we concluded they had taken another course and that we were safe in remaining in the neighborhood over night. In the afternoon we procured flour and bacon from Jim Patee, where we were all given a square meal, after which we went to old man Reece's for the night in order that the Reece boys might say farewell to their father and mother.

In the morning early we started, crossing the Pigeon Creek hills and making our way south. At Isaac Farris' blacksmith shop we stopped and got horse-shoe nails and a shoeing hammer. I shall never forget also that Mr. Farris brought out a stack of pies which seemed to me to be a foot high. Although I had been at home a month where I had feasted bountifully, pies still tasted good. I had lived on hard tack or worse so long that I felt I could never again satisfy my appetite with good things to eat.

We next stopped at the home of Pleas Yates, where we found Captain Reynolds, an officer in Penick's regiment. He had left his company and was visiting his family. He had been very active against the southern people in the community and, as we believed, justly

deserved their censure, if the word hatred would not better describe their sentiments. As we rode up Reynolds came to the door, the ivory shining on the pistols in his belt. He seemed to think we were his own men. Lieutenant Evans ordered four men, myself and three others, to go in and arrest him. Reynolds remained in the door until he saw us dismount. He seemed to step behind the door, but in fact he made a dash for the back door to make his escape. I saw him pass out and gave the alarm. Evans ordered the men to follow and commanded them not to take him alive. I threw the gate open and the boys galloped into the yard. It seemed to me that Yates had ten acres of land fenced off into small lots about his place, but they delayed us only a short time. The first man to reach the fence would jump from his horse and throw it down, the remainder would ride forward. All this time the boys were shooting at the running captain as fast as they could discharge their guns and reload them.

We had with us a tall, swarthy Kentuckian, with black hair and long black whiskers, whose name I have forgotten, and who looked, in his rough soldier clothing, more like a bear than a man. He was the first to reach Reynolds. As he came up Reynolds pulled a silver mounted navy from his belt, but the Kentuckian was too quick for him and had a holster pointed at his head. In an instant Reynolds dropped to his knees, threw up his hands and began to beg. The Kentuckian disobeyed orders and took him prisoner. He said if Reynolds had continued to show fight he would have killed him, but he could not shoot a man who was begging for his life. He brought the Captain back and, as he was then our prisoner, his life was safe, for no man with whom I ever served ever mistreated a prisoner.

When we reached the house Reynolds' wife and the Yates family came out begging and crying pitifully for his life. We had no time to stay and argue or explain. We feared the reports of our guns had reached the ears of Reynold's company and that they would come upon us at any moment. Wall Brinton told the Captain he must go with us, and ordered him to get behind him on his horse. The captain did so amid the wailing and crying of the women and we started away. Reynolds' wife said she would go too, but I told her she could not do so, as we rode through thick brush, and that she could do no good by going.

As we rode along Reynolds said he feared we were Bill Childs and his band of bushwhackers, and that if Childs had found him he would not have been permitted to surrender. He expressed the fear also that his life would not be safe even as our prisoner, if Childs should fall in with us. I assured him that Childs was not as bad as he thought him to be, and that he need have no fear. But even this did not satisfy him. On further inquiry, I learned that Child's wife had been taken by the Union forces and placed in jail, and that Childs charged Reynolds with responsibility for this act. Reynolds' terror of Childs made me believe, without knowing the facts, that the charge was probably well founded.

Evans and I rode along with Brinton and Reynolds and allowed the remainder of the boys to get considerably ahead of us and completely out of sight. When the proper time came we turned out of the road into the thick woods and stopped. Evans then told Reynolds if he would go to St. Joseph and have John Utz and Billy Jones released from prison and resign his office and go back to his family and stay there and behave himself we would turn him loose. The Captain

was more than willing to do all this. Evans then asked him to hold up his hand and be sworn. I told Evans that was not necessary, as I would vouch for the good conduct of the prisoner. Evans then set him free and I never saw a more grateful man in my life. We parted good friends and I learned after the war was over that Reynolds kept his promise, except that he was unable to secure the release of Utz and Jones, as that was out of his power. In all other things he was faithful. I have heard that he often said to those who wanted him to return to the service that Watt Gibson had saved his life, and that but for him both his company and his family would have been without his services; and that he did not propose to break the promise to which he owed his life.

When we overtook the boys and they found we had released Reynolds, it required hard work to keep them from going back after him, but we finally prevailed and the whole squad moved on into Platte County. We camped about two miles east of Camden Point and remained a few days. Mose Cunningham and a man by the name of Linville joined us as recruits. During our stay there some of the boys went over to New Market and spent a portion of the time. The day before we expected to leave, Brinton and I went over to Alfred Jack's, as I wanted to see his daughter, Mollie, before I left. We rode up to the yard fence and there in front of the house lay a dead man—a Federal soldier. We called Mr. Jack and asked him how the man came to be there. He said that some hours before a party of Union militia and a few men that he took to be Confederates had passed his house shooting at each other, but that he did not know anyone had been killed. This

was the first news we had that the Federals were in the community. The skirmish was between some of our men and a scouting party from the other side.

Mr. Jack was greatly disturbed and feared that he would be accused of the man's death, and thought of leaving home. I told him not to do that. He was entirely innocent and the soldiers knew the man had been killed in the skirmish. We helped him carry the body into his yard and started for camp. I knew the news of the fight would soon stir up all the Federals in the community, and, though I missed seeing the young lady, I was glad I learned of the trouble in time to get back to camp. By noon the roads everywhere west of us were full of soldiers. We got glimpses of them now and then from the hill on which we were camped.

We prepared our small camp equipment for traveling, saddled our horses and crossed to the east side of the Platte. Here we selected a good place to be attacked and waited two or three hours. Either they could not find us or did not want to find us, for they did not appear.

Late in the afternoon we resumed our journey to the south, and passed out of Platte and through Clay County without difficulty. The Missouri River was again the great obstacle, as there were a number of us on this trip. Richfield, the point where we had previously crossed, was passed by, and we reached the river bottom some miles below that place, just at night. We cooked and ate supper, and about eight o'clock started for the river, not knowing how we would get across. As we passed through a paw-paw thicket an amusing incident occurred. A man called "halt." As our horses were making a great deal of noise we did not hear either his first or second call. He called again

in a loud voice, "Halt, third and last time!" We stopped at once. He said, "Who are you?" Our lieutenant answered, "Shelby's men. Who are you?" "I am a bushwhacker, by G—." He then asked if any man in our company lived near this place. Our lieutenant answered that a man with us by the name of Hill lived at Richmond. "Tell him to come forward and meet me half way." Then the bushwhacker began calling to his men to fall in line. Hill went forward and met an old acquaintance. Hill asked how many men he had. He said he had none; that he was alone, and was just running a bluff on us. When Hill and the bushwhacker came back to us we all had a jolly laugh.

We learned from him that Bill Anderson, with whom he belonged, was crossing the river with his band of bushwhackers about a mile below, and had sent him out as a picket. He went down with us and assured Anderson that we were his friends. The night was very dark. Anderson had forty-five men and one small skiff. Two men besides the oarsman got into the boat, each holding the bridle of his horse. The horses were then forced in, one on each side, and the skiff put off. It was a long swim for the horses and a long wait for the skiff's return, but it was better than drifting on cottonwood logs, as we had expected to do. With the boat we could all land at the same place. Anderson's men had been crossing since early in the evening and by midnight all were over and the skiff delivered to us. The last of our company reached the southern shore just at sun up, and our long journey seemed almost over with the river behind us.

Anderson, after crossing, learned that a Federal regiment was in camp at Sibley. He took his forty-five men and surprised them. They charged through the whole regiment, yelling and shooting, and killed,

wounded and ran over about twenty of them without losing a man. Not satisfied with this they charged back, and by that time, the soldiers had collected their senses and their guns. Anderson was killed and three of his men wounded. I have always believed that Anderson and most of his men were half drunk that morning. The wounded men were placed in a tent in the thick willows and left to the care of sympathizing women. Anderson's death left his men without a leader. Forty-one remained able to go forward and they joined with our thirty. This made a pretty strong squad and we traveled the public roads in day light.

After two days our provisions gave out and we separated into little companies of from four to six in order to get provisions and horse feed from the residents of the country along the road, arranging in advance to unite at a given place. I recall an incident of this trip which afforded us great amusement. It happened near the north bank of the Osage River. Our straggling parties had united in order to be together at the fording of the river, and as we passed down toward the river we met a squad of about ten militia. Neither party appeared to be suspicious of the other, and the militia really thought we were a part of their own forces. We rode directly up to them and spoke very politely. Asked them where they were going and they told us they were going home. Said they had been after Price and had driven the d—d old Rebel out of Missouri once more and were just getting home. We then told them we were a part of Price's forces that had not been driven out, and drew our navies on them. It was pitiful to see the expressions of terror that came over their faces. We made them dismount and disarm themselves. They did so with the greatest apparent willingness. We destroyed their arms as we had no

use for them, and made them swear a dreadful oath and promise they would never molest Price or any of his men again. When they did this they were ordered to move on, and seemed greatly rejoiced that their lives had been spared. The many bitter experiences I had during the war led me to doubt seriously whether we would have been as well treated had we been caught by our enemies at as great a disadvantage as we had them. And some of our men had long been with Bill Anderson, about whom the most dreadful stories of cruelty have been written—by men I presume who never dared to come out of hiding and who wrote the terrors of their own cowardly souls rather than anything real or true.

It must be understood that I am not attempting a defense of Anderson or his men further than to relate what their conduct was while I was with them. It was by chance only, in the manner I have related, that I was thrown with these men on this trip southward, and though we met a number of returning squads of militia in the same way and always had the advantage of them, not a man of them was mistreated other than to be disarmed, if that may be called mistreatment. The situation may and probably was different when these men were attacked or when the enemy was campaigning against them. I have heard it said that, under such circumstances, men who encountered Anderson's men had to fight, run or die.

With more or less difficulty and with many hardships, but without any incident worth mentioning, we made our way to the Arkansas River about twenty miles below Fort Smith. The river was running pretty full and there was no hope of finding a ferry without encountering Federal troops, so we constructed a rude raft of cottonwood logs, got on it and swam our horses

alongside. This occasioned considerable delay, but we got safely over and made our way to Red River, where we had much the same experience. We reached Price at Clarksville, Texas, and remained with him there until January.

At this time Price's army was all cavalry—just as it came off of the raid into Missouri—and consisted of about five thousand men. Early in January he moved down on Red River about fifty miles distant in order to get feed for his horses. Horse feed was scarce about Clarksville, but in Red River bottom the cane was abundant and the move was made that the horses might be grazed upon the cane. Price remained there until spring and was still there when Lee surrendered. Price and his staff prepared to go to Mexico and seven of us—Buchanan and Platte County neighbor boys—saddled our horses, bade him goodby and started for home.

CHAPTER XVI.

Worse Than War.

The members of our party were Bill and Jack Evans, Curly Smith, Mose Cunningham of Camden Point, and one of his neighbors, whose name I do not now recall, Wall Brinton and myself. Our horses were in good condition, and, though the war was over, we supplied ourselves well with arms and ammunition and it was well we did, for in all my experiences,I never suffered such hardships or came so near losing my life as on this journey home after the war was over. We traveled a long distance, as it seemed then, and met with no difficulty except lack of food. Homes in that country were few and far between and when we chanced upon a house no one was at home but half starved, ragged women and children. They had little to offer us and lived themselves by taking their dogs to the woods and chasing game or wild hogs which had gone through the winter and were unfit for food. They always offered to divide, but we did not have the heart to accept their offer, and lived on such game as we could kill as we traveled along. We always gave these women such encouragement as we could, told them the war was over and they might soon expect their husbands and sons to return to them. We did not say if they were still alive, but we and they sadly understood always that such a condition might well have been added.

I do not recall how we got across the Arkansas River, but I do remember that in the heavy timber on this side we came upon nine men in camp who claimed to be "bushwhackers." They invited us to

join them and as we were tired and hungry we did so. We rested the remainder of the day and at night they told us there was to be a dance—frolic—in the neighborhood and invited us to go. We did so and witnessed a dance in truly Arkansas style. I took no part, but enjoyed looking on at the others. When we reached camp late in the night we all spread our blankets down around the fire and slept, feeling the greatest security. Next morning three of their men and three of our horses were gone. We said nothing, but cooked and ate our breakfasts and went back to the cane-brake to make further search for the horses. We hunted until noon, but could not find them. We returned to the camp where the six remaining members of the party were and got dinner. After dinner at a given signal we drew our navies and made them disarm, which they did with much more haste than "bushwhackers" would have done. We then asked them to tell where our horses were. Three of the six proved to be really our friends and knew nothing about the horses. The other three were in with the men who had gone. The missing horses belonged to Mose Cunningham, Wall Brinton and myself. They told us various stories. One said that my horse had been taken by the son of a widow woman who lived seven miles east. Others said the horses had been taken to Fort Smith, twenty miles west. We settled the matter by saddling three of their horses and riding away. We rode the remainder of the day and until two o'clock in the night without anything to eat. About this hour we came upon a house and roused the inmates and told them we must have provisions. We got a ham, some flour, sugar and coffee and started on. By nine o'clock next morning we had gotten far up into the rugged, mountainous country where it seemed safe to stop. We dismounted

and cooked breakfast, but took the precaution to send two men back on the mountain to keep watch. I had eaten my breakfast, saddled my horse and was ready to go. The other boys were taking more time. I reminded them that we might be followed and that they had better make haste. I had scarcely uttered the words when the boys on the lookout came running down the mountain and before they reached the camp a company of soldiers appeared at the crest. They commenced throwing hot lead down at us, and we returned it and kept it up until the boys got into camp and grabbed up a handful of provisions. I made a breastworks of my horse and stood and shot across my saddle until the horse fell at my feet. By that time our guns were empty, and without time to reload we ran to the mountains, leaving everything but our guns and the clothes upon our backs.

It was disheartening to think that, tired and hungry as we were, we could not have peace long enough to cook and eat the poor provisions secured at the farm house the night before, and it was still more disheartening to reflect upon where the next meal was to be found. In spite of this we still had much to be thankful for. Although left on foot and without provisions, we still had our lives and plenty of powder and lead, and, in those days when human life was so cheap, these were our greatest concern.

The party attacking did not follow us into the brush on the mountain side. We had all the advantage there and were desperate enough to have used it to any extent and without much conscience, had occasion required. Our little party was scattered, each man taking care of himself. Some kept moving up the mountain while some crouched like hunted quails in what appeared to be safe hiding places. In a little

while our pursuers gathered up our horses and the fragments of provisions we had left and started away. After a long wait the boys began to signal each other and shortly we were united.

It was a long and weary trudge to Fayetteville. We were compelled to keep near the main traveled road, (which was little better than a bridle path), because the country was so rough and the timber so heavy that we feared we might lose our way. Our only food was the game we killed—squirrels and wild turkey and now and then a deer. This we dressed and broiled over a camp fire and ate without bread or salt. Hard as this method of subsistence was, it had at least one advantage over an army march—we had plenty of time. The bare ground had been our resting place so long that we were quite accustomed to it, and even, without the luxury of a blanket, we slept and rested much.

At Fayetteville we got the first square meal since leaving the camp on the Arkansas River, and, as it was by no means safe to remain there, we secured such provisions as we could carry, and started on, still on foot. Above Fayetteville the country became less mountainous and, although we always slept in the timber, we found little trouble in securing food. We crossed Cowskin River and made our way to Granby, where the lead mines were located. In a little valley shortly out of Granby we found a drove of poor, thin horses. They had fared badly during the winter, but looked as though they might be able to help us along somewhat, so we peeled hickory bark and made halters and each man caught himself a horse. We had not gone far when we discovered that riding barebacked

on the skeleton of a horse was a poor substitute for walking, so we turned our horses loose and continued the journey on foot.

Johnstown, a small town in Bates County, is the next point, I remember distinctly. A company of militia was stationed there and all the people in the country round-about were colonized in and near the town. Although we knew the militia were there, we took our chances on going quite near the town, for we were compelled to have food. Late in the afternoon we stopped at a house in the outskirts of the town and found the man and his family at home. The man belonged to the militia company, so we held him until the family cooked supper for us. After we had eaten we started on, taking the man with us to prevent him from reporting on us, advising his family at the same time that if we were pursued it would be because some of them had informed on us and in that event the man would never return. They were glad enough to promise anything that would give them hope of his return, and we felt quite sure we would not be discovered from that source.

We left the house between five and six o'clock and had not gone far when we saw three militia men who had been out on a scout, riding toward us. When they came within a hundred yards or so the leader called on us to halt. He asked, "Who are you?" Wall Brinton replied, but I do not recall what he said. The leader evidently did not believe him for he replied by telling us to consider ourselves under arrest. This was, under our circumstances, equivalent to opening hostilities, so we replied with our navies. One horse fell with the man on him. The other two hastily assisted the rider to mount behind one of them. They galloped back and took another road toward the town. We hurried on to

a thick grove of timber some distance ahead where we could secure protection against the attack that we felt sure would later be made upon us. As the news of our presence had now gone back to headquarters, our prisoner could be of no more service, so we turned him loose. We reached the timber and waited and watched, but, for some reason, no attempt was made to capture us. Darkness soon came on and we lost no time in making our escape. At daylight next morning we were at Little Grand River, fifteen miles north.

Shortly after we left our hiding place in the timber near Johnstown, it began to rain and rained on us all night long as we journeyed. Little Grand River was running nearly bank full, but we had to cross. We made a raft by binding logs together with hickory bark, placed the guns and clothing upon it and pushed out, each man holding on at the rear, swimming and pushing. We were soon across and as it seemed to be a wild, uninhabited spot, we built a fire and warmed ourselves and dried our clothing, and all got a little sleep, one man always standing guard. About ten o'clock I grew restless and uneasy and awakened the boys and told them we had better move on, as that company of militia might start early in the morning to follow us and, if they did so, they might be expected to appear at any time. Wall Brinton, our captain, agreed to this and we made another start, although some of the boys opposed it and said we had as well be killed as run ourselves to death.

We traveled westwardly, up the river, about two miles and then north to the bluffs where we found what appeared to be sufficient protection in the timber and hills to warrant a stop for further rest. It was a beautiful day after the rain the night before and we lay

in the warm sunshine and slept as well as hungry men could sleep. We peeled slippery elm bark and ate it, but it did little to satisfy our hunger.

Late in the afternoon, Curly Smith, Wall Brinton and I were chewing upon our elm bark and six of our boys were fast asleep, when a company of soldiers rode up in twenty yards of us before we saw them. Smith saw them first and said to me, "Who is that?" I sprang to my feet, turning around as I did so. I knew them at a glance and knew also that we were in trouble. There was no time to plan—no time even to run—and six of the nine of us fast asleep. My first thought was to wake the boys so I called out at the top of my voice, "Who are you?" They gave no answer, but opened fire upon us. Brinton, Smith and I each took a tree and let them come on. It was a desperate situation and every load in the brace of six-shooters we carried must be made to count. When they were close enough for our work to be effective, we began on them. From the way they dropped out of their saddles I am sure very few of our bullets went astray. The captain kept urging his men on, calling "Give them hell, boys!" and we kept busy. The captain himself galloped up within two rods of me, threw his saber around his head and ordered me to surrender. I had, as I thought, just one shot left. I put it through his heart. I saw it twist, as it seemed, through his coat, and I shall never forget the writhing of his body and the dreadful frown as he fell from his horse. Most of them who were left had now exhausted the loads in their guns, and when they saw their captain fall retreated. We whirled and ran with all our might. The boys who had been asleep were gone. They had awakened and started at the first volley. A short run brought us in sight of the other boys

who were at the moment trying to pass around a long, narrow slough, which lay between them and timber on the other side. Brinton's right arm was broken between the wrist and elbow. He had received the wound as he threw his arm from behind the tree to shoot. It was bleeding badly, but we kept running and calling to our companions to turn and fight. They paid no attention to us, but kept on around the slough. During this time the men who attacked us had rallied and were riding down upon us. Brinton kept calling and urging the boys to turn and fight, and finally as our pursuers drew closer they turned and fired, and this checked the men who were after us for a moment. By this time poor Wall had grown weak and sick from loss of blood and could go no farther. We had been running side by side. The last words he said to me were, "I am sick, I can't go on. I will have to surrender. Make your escape if you can." Such a thing seemed impossible at the moment, but I feared nothing so much as the "mercy" of the men who were after us. Wall threw up his well arm and I ran as fast as I could toward the slough or lake and plunged right in. The brush and vines on the other side were my only hope, aside from the discovery I made as I ran that I had one more load in my navy. Our enemies, except one man, took after the boys who were running around the lake. As I waded in water nearly waist deep the man who had followed me rode up to the edge of the lake and ordered me to halt. I paid no attention to him but waded on, watching him all the time. He rode out into the water, raised his gun as if to shoot and called the second time. I stopped and turned and leveled the muzzle of my navy at his belt and fired. He fell off his horse into the water. When I got across I looked back and saw him struggling to keep his head

out of the water. I do not know what became of him. I foresaw when he came up and rode into the lake that he or I would be doing that very thing, and I felt that the chance load left in my navy was, as it proved to be, my only protection against it. The fight was still going on up the lake. I looked and saw Jack Evans down in the water and heard him calling for help. The other boys were just wading out. I ran to them and as I came up I saw blood streaming from the leg of one of the men. He had been shot in the thigh, but was still able to walk.

We soon got out of sight in the thick brush and they did not follow us. Including the man who remained with us, four of our men had been wounded in the fight. Three of them, Wall Brinton, Jack Evans and one of the Platte County boys, were compelled to surrender, and we learned that all of them, wounded prisoners though they were, were shot in cold blood. We never knew how many of their men were killed and wounded.

We hurried on through the brush back toward the river, and when we reached it we found a log for our wounded man and all swam across to the south side. After traveling a few miles down the river we crossed in the same manner and made directly north. Just before dark we came to an abandoned log house and stopped. We were in a pitiable condition. No food since the night before, tired and wet, depressed in spirits by the loss of our comrades, whom we knew had already been killed, and with a wounded man upon our hands. To remain there so close to the men who were after us meant that we would be captured and killed.

We talked the matter over. The wounded man, whose name I do not recall, in company with his

brother, fell in with us at the Arkansas River. He was so weak and was suffering so much that he could go no farther, so he and his brother decided to remain at the cabin through the night and trust to the mercy of some one whom they might find next day to give them assistance and shield them from the soldiers who had pursued us from Johnstown. They agreed that the four of us who were uninjured would not be so apt to secure sympathy and that we had better move on.

It was a sad farewell that we bade our wounded companion and his brother that night, and it was, for me at least, a farewell indeed, for I have never seen or heard from them since, but it seemed the best and only thing that could be done. As soon as it was dark we started and traveled all night, though very slowly, and until late in the afternoon of the day following. At that time we came near a small place, the name of which I do not now remember. We went up close to the town and stopped at a house. Two men in blue clothes were there with the family and we immediately took charge of them and ordered supper. They prepared a splendid meal for us and we ate it as only men can eat who have gone forty-eight hours without food. It was a cool evening and they had a small fire in an old-fashioned fire-place. After supper we asked them to spread some bed clothes before the fire and three of us lay down and slept while the fourth stood guard over the men. We took turns standing guard through the night and next morning ordered an early breakfast and left as soon as it was daylight.

We started north, and as soon as we got out of sight of the house turned east a short distance and then went back south about a mile to a high knoll covered with black jack. We lay there all day and watched the maneuvers of the blue coats. They

scoured the country to the north far and near, but never approached the knoll on which we were hidden. We had a fine rest after our two good meals, and we needed it following the events of the past two days. When night came and everything got still we came down and went to the same house for supper. The men had not returned from hunting us, and the women were much surprised to see us. They gave us a good supper and we bade them goodby and started north, listening all the time for approaching horses from either direction. We had no difficulty, and by morning were well out of the way.

The next place I remember was in Jackson County near Independence. As we were worn out, ragged and almost barefooted, and as the war was over, we decided to see the provost marshal and get a pass on which we could travel on to our homes in safety. I went to a good Union man's house and told him what I wanted. He promised to see the marshal for me, and I directed him where to find us. Upon his return he said the pass would be provided. Next morning they sent a small company of soldiers out and we saw that we had been deceived. They looked us over carefully and talked pretty saucy, but did not harm us. We looked so shabby that they evidently thought we did not amount to much. They put us in a two-horse wagon and took us to Warrensburg, forty miles farther from home. There we were placed in a guardhouse where we were kept two or three days, without telling us what their plans were. One morning a guard came and took one of our men—a mere boy—down to headquarters and quizzed him to find out if he knew anything about the fight on Little Grand River. He denied it. Then they came and got one of the other boys, but he managed also to convince them

that we had been together—just the four of us—since we left the south. This seemed to satisfy them for they did not call on me, but we were not released.

The day following a guard came and marched us out to the edge of town and set us to work hoeing in a garden, with a negro woman for a boss. I called her "aunty," and cut up as many beans and peas as I did weeds. I kept my "boss" busy showing me how, and she got precious little work out of me. I began to suspect they were trying to connect us with the Grand River affair, and feared they might get some one who would identify us or pretend to do so, and I did not like the prospect, so I made up my mind I would leave them some how and go home without a pass. The guard-house was a brick building that had been a dwelling. A water tank stood out in the yard and the prisoners all went there for water. Four men stood guard day and night, and it was customary at six o'clock to turn the men in and lock them up. On the evening that I decided to escape I managed to hide in a pile of lumber that lay in the yard near the water tank, and when the guards put the men in and locked the doors they did not miss me. I lay very still until late at night. I could hear the guard pass on his beat and by the time required to pass me and return I could judge the length of his beat. When I thought it safe to make my dash I watched and after he had passed south, I waited until he had gone, as well as I could estimate, to the end of his beat, then I leaped across his path so quickly that he did not have time to think, much less shoot. I ran down a dark alley and had no trouble in reaching the outskirts of the town. I took across the fields, not knowing where I was going, nor caring much, just so I was getting away. I had been gone but a little while when I heard the town bell ring and knew the alarm

had been turned in. Then I heard horses galloping out, as I supposed, on every road from town. I heard the horses gallop across a bridge some distance from town, and concluded I would cross no bridges that night. I moved cautiously on, and by and by came to a creek somewhat in the direction I had heard horses cross the bridge. I followed the creek, watching all the time for bridges and after a while came to a foot-log. I crossed and made my way out of the thick brush and stopped to get my bearings. It was a starlight night. I located the north star and took it for my guide and traveled all night.

When daylight came I found myself in a creek bottom and in a body of very large timber. I found a large, hollow sycamore with a hole in the side reaching down to the ground large enough to admit me. I sat back into that tree to get a little rest and possibly a little sleep. I watched and listened. A good while after sun up I saw a man going with a yoke of cattle toward a field, which I could see through the timber, to plow. Two big, savage looking dogs were following him. The dogs raised their heads and came toward me as though they scented me and I made sure I would be discovered, but they turned in another direction before they got very near and did not disturb me. I sat there all day and, in spite of my hunger, slept and rested. When night came I made another start as soon as I could see the north star. I traveled all night and when morning came I still had but little idea where I was. I went up on a high hill which was covered with brush and from which I could see all about me. Everything was quiet, so I lay down and slept. I awoke about ten o'clock and saw a stage-coach loaded with passengers passing along a road below me. This was the first information I had that I was near a public road. I re-

mained in the brush awhile and then decided to move along cautiously by daylight. I saw a house now and then and, though terribly hungry, I did not dare approach it and ask for food. Toward night I reached the rugged hills, from which I judged I must be near the Missouri River. Just before dark I found an empty tobacco barn and crawled into it and remained throughout the night. This was the third night with two days intervening—sixty hours—in which I had not tasted food, and I was worn out with my long tramp besides.

I did not sleep well that night. My accommodations were very poor and my gnawing appetite, made me wakeful. I had one comfort, however, I was well hidden, and this reflection rewarded me for much of my suffering. Since this trip home I have had a warm sympathy for all hunted beasts.

When day began to dawn I commenced observing my situation without. I saw a house near by and watched it for an hour. I could only see two women, and from the way they attended the work outside as well as in the house, I concluded there were no men about the place and that it would be safe for me to venture up and ask for something to eat, and, if I got into trouble, trust my legs, the only weapons I had, to get me out. I went up cautiously and found what I could not discover from my hiding place, that one was an old lady and the other a girl just grown. I spoke to the old lady and told her my famished condition. She said she was sorry for me, but she had orders to feed nobody on either side and that she could not disobey them without getting into trouble herself. I told her the war was over and that I was trying to get home. I had tried to quit fighting when I left Price on Red River, but had had greater difficulty in keeping myself from being killed since I quit fighting than before. She still

refused to give me anything. Finally, my entreaties won the girl. She spoke up and said, "Mother, I have made no promises. You have kept your promise and have refused him food. I will give him something to eat." With that she told me to draw my chair to the table and she began to set such a meal before me as I had not tasted in years, it seemed. Cold boiled ham, light bread, milk and butter, preserves, honey, cake and pie —plenty of all, and rations I had not heard of in months. I will not attempt to describe how ravenously I ate. I was probably as shabby looking a mortal as ever sat down to a meal at a civilized table. My hair and beard were long and had not been combed for days. I had not washed my face since I escaped from the guard-house. My clothes—what was left of them—were, with walking through mud and rain, wading lakes and sloughs and swimming rivers, soiled and grimy beyond description. When I had finished eating the girl asked me if I would take a lunch along with me. Of course I told her I would, and that I would always be grateful to her, and I have kept my promise. I have many times remembered that kindness and thanked that young lady over and over a thousand times in my heart.

I took my package and bade the girl and her mother goodby and started for the woods. I soon reached level ground and heavy timber and knew I was in the river bottom. I went cautiously along until I saw the river in the distance. Then I selected a good shade and lay down and had a fine rest after my good meal. I awoke some time along in the afternoon. Everything was quiet—no sound of human foot or voice. I ate my lunch and went down to the river bank to select a good crossing place. I found a place that suited me. Then I prepared three logs and brought

them to the water's edge and tied them firmly together with hickory bark which I peeled from the saplings near by. I found in a drift close at hand a clap-board suitable for an oar, and my craft was ready to sail. I might have made the crossing in daylight without being molested, but, not knowing what I might encounter on the other shore, I decided to wait for night.

As soon as it began to grow dark I went down and pushed my raft into the water and tied it to the root of a tree. I then got astride of it with feet and legs up to the knees in the water to see if it would bear my weight. It appeared to be sufficiently strong, so with my clap-board in my hand I cut loose. The current caught me and took me rapidly down stream, but I was sure if I kept using my paddle it would have sufficient effect to land me on the other side some time. It soon grew very dark, so that I could not see the shore on either side, and I could not tell I was moving except by the water running past my feet and legs. After what seemed a very long time, and after I had grown very tired both with my labor and my position on the raft, I felt my feet strike the sand. I got up and towed the raft to shore and pulled it up on dry land. Then I took a rest and planned. I might be on an island and in that case I would have further need for my raft. I could only ascertain my position by investigating, so when sufficiently rested I started on across the land, breaking the top of a bush every few steps to guide me back in case I should find myself upon an island. I soon came to a slough which I waded without difficulty and passed on. A little farther on I came to another slough, which I also waded. The ground under my feet seemed to grow firmer as I walked away from this slough. I passed into a body of good sized timber and finally I came to a wagon road, and I knew then that I

was on the main land and the Missouri River which had given me so much trouble during the four preceding years was again behind me. My little raft might rest and I should have no need to retrace my steps by the broken bushes.

I had no idea what time of night it was. I was tired and wet, but with all that, felt much better than on the preceding night when so hungry. I thought it must be twenty miles or more to where my sister lived in the northeast portion of Clay County, so I again took the north star for my guide and set out, bearing west somewhat when I found traveling that way agreeable, but never east. I paid no attention to roads unless they led in my direction. When daylight came I was at a loss to know where I was. I saw a house in the distance and went up near it. No one was up, so I sat down to wait. In a little while a girl came out to a wood pile and began picking up chips. I went up and asked her how far it was to Greenville. She said one mile. I asked her which direction and she pointed east. I thanked her and started in the direction she pointed. I was no sooner out of sight than I turned my course due north, for I was then in less than two miles of my sister's home. I arrived shortly after sun up, and as I went into her house and sat down to a good breakfast, I felt that my troubles ought to be fairly over, now that the war had closed; but my terrible experiences on the way home caused me to doubt whether I could go back and live in peace, even if there was no war.

I remained with my sister a day or two, never showing myself in daylight, for I learned from her that now since fear of southern soldiers was over, all those who were too cowardly to go to the front but had remained at home and robbed and harassed old men and women and children, were giving the community

more trouble than at any time during the war. They were all very brave then and organized companies and marched and drilled and galloped over the roads, seeking all manner of pretenses to rob and kill those who had sympathized with the south. Returning Confederate soldiers, were, in those first days after the close of the war, in greater danger than when in the front of battle, as my own recent experience had shown, and I was not alone, for my sister told me of a number of soldiers who had returned from the south only to be killed after reaching home.

I was sure I would find much the same condition in Buchanan County that I had encountered all along my route home, and I did not like the prospect that lay before me.

I learned from my sister that Trav. Turner, a neighbor of hers, was at St. Joseph fitting up a freight train for Salt Lake. I knew Turner well. He had carried food to Brother James and me while we lay in the brush waiting to hear the fate of Charley Pullins who was capturned when we were all overtaken at the home of Reuben Eastin in that neighborhood, and I knew, if I could reach him, I would have no difficulty in getting away from the country. Something had to be done. If I should be discovered at the home of my sister it would give the "yard dogs," as those brave murderers of that community were called, a pretext for robbing her and probably for killing her husband or some of her family. We decided upon a plan. I shaved very clean and parted my long hair in the middle, put on one of my sister's dresses and both of us put on sunbonnets. We got in a buggy and started for Saint Joseph. We passed right through old Haynesville, the center of all the patriotic parading of the "yard dogs," on through Plattsburg and reached the home of Jack Elder, a half mile

from my old home, where we stayed all night. Next morning we drove on to Saint Joseph and took dinner with my brother, Isaac. I remember this incident particularly for the family had company for dinner. I was introduced as a Clay County friend of Mrs. Wilson's and sat down at the same table, and the visitors did not suspect me through my disguise. After dinner we drove to the ferry at the foot of Francis Street and drove on. The boat was crowded and they had to place our buggy in line in order to make room for others. Two men took hold of the buggy to lift it around. My sister said, "Wait and we will get out." The men said, "No, sit still *ladies,* we can lift it with you in it." We sat still, and crossed over. On reaching the other side we drove out through the woods and found Turner's camp. Passing on beyond and out of sight, I removed my disguise, after which we returned to the camp and I bade my sister good-by.

CHAPTER XVII.

Across the Plains in Sixty-five.

I was perfectly at home in Turner's camp, not only on account of my acquaintance with him, but on account of my old familiarity with plainsmen's ways.

There were nineteen men in the train, and but three of them, Turner, Cap. Hughes, the wagon boss, and James Curl, of Rushville, knew me. They were all discreet and kept their knowledge to themselves. I went by the name of John Allen. Just before we were ready to start my brother-in-law, James Reynolds, sent me a mule, bridle and saddle and a small amount of money. We pulled out early one morning, sixteen wagons, four yoke of oxen to each wagon, and forty hundred in each load. Some time was required to get the men and cattle accustomed to traveling, and for a while our progress was slow. At Fort Kearney the soldiers stopped our train. They told us the Indians were on the warpath ahead and the authorities refused to permit any train to pass on without fifty men. This forced us to wait until another train came up. During this time we were required to organize ourselves into a company of soldiers, elect a captain and drill several hours every day. The captain ordered me out to drill with the boys. I told him I knew as much about drilling as I wanted to know and refused to go. Turner thought he had to obey the authorities and had all his men drill very industriously. I told him he had better stop that foolishness and pull out or he would not reach Salt Lake before Christmas. He said he did not know how to get away from the orders given him by the soldiers. I told him to

turn the matter over to me and I would show him. He did as I requested and gave orders that until further notice I should be obeyed.

The following morning I was out before daylight. I quietly aroused the men and ordered them to prepare to move. Everything was soon ready and before sun up we were on the road. I made twenty-five miles that day, which put us so far ahead that we never again heard of soldiers or of the trains that expected to accompany us. Turner wanted me to remain in charge of the train, but I told him I could not do it, as I had had trouble enough the past four years, but that I would give him all the assistance in my power.

The train moved along slowly over the old road up the Platte which was so familiar to me, until it reached the upper crossing at South Platte, where I crossed in forty-nine. From that point we continued up South Platte over a road with which I was not familiar. When we reached the mouth of the Cache le Poudre River we crossed and left the Platte and followed the Cache le Poudre up about 75 miles, as I remember it. There we left the river and passed over a high plateau, or divide as we called it, and down into a beautiful valley, the head waters of Laramie River. After crossing this valley we passed through a very rough country that lay between the Laramie and the North Platte. On this stretch of the road and at a point I do not now remember, we passed a government fort. There I saw Gillispie Poteet, with whom I had gone to school as a boy. He was a private in the Federal service. I do not know whether he recognized me or not. I passed him without speaking or making myself known. My experiences in the war had made me doubtful of even my old school mates when I saw them in such company as I found him.

After crossing North Platte, which was but a small stream at that point, we passed into the worst alkali country I ever saw in my life. It extended from the North Platte to the Colorado River—a distance of one hundred and fifty miles or more.

We had a hundred and twenty-five head of cattle and about one-fifth of them gave out before we were half way across the desert and had to be herded behind the train. In this state of affairs, which seemed about as bad as it could well be, Turner was taken sick. He and Captain Hughes had been having trouble with the men, and Turner was greatly worried, and I thought at first that he was homesick. The second day after Turner was taken sick he came to me and asked me to take charge of the train and let him go on by stage to Salt Lake City where he could rest and see a doctor. I had been thinking for several days that I would like to leave the train and go on by stage myself, but did not like to leave Turner while he was in trouble. So when he proposed to go on I suggested that he leave the train with Captain Hughes and that I go along with him to care for him. He said he could not consent to go on unless I remained with the train; that if we both went the men would abandon the train on the desert. I then told him I would do my best; that he had stood by me when I was in trouble, had carried food to me in the brush when, if he had been discovered, it would have cost him his life, and that I was ready to do everything I could for him. I saw Captain Hughes and found it was agreeable to him that I take charge.

We had then been nearly three months on the road. The cattle were poor and worn out and there was little food for them upon the desert. The men were tired and had been inclined to rebel against Turner and Hughes, and many times it was all that all of us could do to keep

them from abandoning the train. Under these trying conditions, I took charge, much against my inclination, but out of a sense of duty to Turner.

Turner took the stage and left us. I immediately gave the men to understand that I would have no foolishness and that I intended to push the train on in good order and as rapidly as conditions would permit. The men seemed to believe I could do what I said I could do and became very well satisfied. I had trouble with only one man—a negro that Curl had picked up at Fort Kearney, and placed in charge of one of his teams. He weighed about 180 pounds, and had just been discharged from the Union army. He felt very important, and still wore his blue uniform. The trouble arose in this way: At night we placed the wagons so as to form a large corral, leaving a gap on one side. In the morning the cattle would be rounded up and driven into the corral to be yoked. This negro would not go out in the roundup, but would remain at the camp until the cattle came up, then in place of waiting until the cattle were safely in the corral, he would pick up his yoke and start for his cattle directly in front of the drove. Many of the cattle would frighten at this and run away and have to be rounded up again. The boys had scolded him frequently, but he paid no attention to them, and when I went in charge they complained to me. I spoke to the negro firmly but kindly and told him to wait until the cattle were all driven in before attempting to yoke his cattle. He paid no attention to me, and as usual frightened the cattle back. I said nothing more to him. The next morning I took one of the long bull whips, the stock of which was of seasoned hickory and eight or ten feet long, and took my stand at the side of the gap as though I intended to assist in driving the cattle in. When the front cattle came

up the negro started for his oxen with the yoke in his hands. Quick as a flash I changed ends on the whipstock and with the butt of it I gave him such a rap on the side of the head that he dropped his yoke and staggered out of the way. That was the last trouble I had with that negro. He was as obliging and obedient to me after that as I could ask a negro to be.

I got the train to the Colorado River where there was plenty of water and grass, and rested three days. I crossed the river and moved on up Black Fork about forty miles to Fort Bridger. There I met Turner who had returned from Salt Lake to see how we got along. I drove the train up close to the fort and stopped on a stream. The cattle were unyoked and I had gone with them to the stream to see that they all got water. It was a beautiful place to camp, and with the fort so close at hand I thought we could all lie down and rest without fear of Indians. While I was at the creek three men with yellow stripes on their shoulders rode up and asked me where the owner of the train was. I directed them to Turner, who was at the camp. They rode off and I followed and reached the camp in time to hear them tell Turner that he must move on; that he could not camp in five miles of the fort; that they were saving the grass for hay. Turner asked me what he should do. I told him there was but one thing to do—move on. That the fort was placed there for the purpose of protecting emigrants, and freighters, but that did not matter. Those gentlemen in blue clothes and yellow stripes must be protected or they could not draw their salaries.

The dead line they had drawn was five miles beyond, and it was nearly night and our cattle were hungry and we were foot-sore and worn out, and all the Indians on the plains could rob and scalp us that distance away from the fort and not a gentleman in blue

clothes and yellow stripes be disturbed by it, but we had to move. I was rebellious again—more so I believe than at any moment during the war, which had just closed—and but for my recent efforts and my dismal failure, I should have felt much like challenging the whole regiment with my twenty cowboys. We were not the only sufferers. An emigrant train of about twenty families, men, women and children from near Rushville, Buchanan County, in which were Joe Hart and Tom Hill, who I remember had fallen in with us and were traveling close behind, they, too, had to pack up and start. It was late at night when we reached a safe distance from the fort under escort of the gentlemen in blue clothes and yellow stripes, and we stopped on a desert so barren that we had to corral the cattle and hold the poor hungry things all night. In the morning we moved on some miles farther and found grass and water and stopped the remainder of the day. A little less than a week later we pulled into Salt Lake, seventy miles west of Fort Bridger, with the merchandise in good condition, but with the cattle pretty well played out. I remained with Turner until his wagons were all unloaded. When that was finished my free boarding house was closed. My mule was so poor that he was almost worthless. I had but little money, and my friends were all preparing to start back. I could not think of going with them and I felt the necessity for stirring about and finding something to do.

In a few days a large train pulled in from the west. I went to the boss and asked him what his plans were. He told me he was hauling flour from Salt Lake City to Helena, Montana. I asked him about the Montana country, and where and how he wintered his cattle. He said he grazed them on Boulder Creek near Helena, and that there was no better range in the west. I learned

farther that he would start on his last trip before winter in about a week. I did not tell him that I thought of applying for a job driving an ox team.

Next day Turner, having disposed of his goods, asked me what he owed me. I told him he owed me nothing; that he had paid me long ago by protecting me in time of war, and had brought me away from danger free of charge. Turner said he would not have it that way; that if I had not been along his train would be back upon the alkali desert, and that he proposed to pay me. I then told him of my plan to drive an ox team on to Montana, as I was a pretty good bull-whacker and had to have some place to go. In reply to this he said I must do no such thing; that if I would name the place I wanted to go he would see that I had a way to get there without driving a team. I told him I had no place in particular in mind, but would be satisfied anywhere among the mountains and Indians—just so I could get away from the old war troubles back in civilization.

In a few days Turner came back and told me his cattle were so poor that he could not sell them, and proposed that I buy them and take them along with me. I replied that I had no money, besides I was alone and felt that I could not handle the cattle. He said I did not need any money, that he would take my note and as to the other matters he would fix them. He then made me a present of a fine mare, a gun and a hundred dollars in money. He also gave me a wagon loaded with provisions. With this equipment, it began to look as though I could take the cattle, and that the plan he had made for me was much better than any I could have made for myself. Jim Curl, a Buchanan County boy, had sixteen head of cattle which he added

to mine. He loaded a wagon with provisions and each of us hired a man to drive our team, and with this arrangement made we were ready to start.

We remained at Salt Lake until Turner had finished his business. His entire outfit at St. Joseph cost him about seven thousand dollars. He paid about two thousand dollars in wages to the men who assisted him. He received twenty-five thousand six hundred dollars for his cargo. I saw him get the money and put it in a bank. I realized then what a loss it would have been to him had he failed to get his train across, and he often told me if I had not been along he might never have succeeded. I gave Turner my note for four thousand dollars for the cattle and he took the stage for home. The next day Curl and I left for Boulder Valley.

For seventy-five miles or more out of Salt Lake we had to pass through the Mormon settlements and we had great difficulty in keeping the cattle out of the fields and gardens. We crossed Bear River just above the point where it empties into Salt Lake and, after crossing a range of mountains, found Hedgepeth's cutoff, a road I had traveled in 1854. A short distance farther on, and from the top of a high divide, I could see Snake River valley near Fort Hall, my old trail in 1849. When we got down to the river and crossed the deep worn trail, the scene was quite familiar to me, although it had been a good many years since I had viewed it the last time. After crossing Snake River we set out across the mountains for our destination. I can't remember the names of many points on this trip. In fact the road was comparatively new and but few places had names. I remember passing over a broad, sandy desert, where our cattle nearly famished for water, and then down a long grade over almost solid rock. Near the bottom of this grade I saw a small

stream some distance away, and rode down to see if I could find a way by which the cattle could reach water. I recall this distinctly because while hunting a path to the water I saw two queer looking animals, the like of which I had never seen before. I learned afterwards that they were lynx.

Next day we passed into a beautiful valley where we had plenty of water and grass, but it snowed most of the day—a wet snow that soon melted and did not interfere much with grazing. Passing on we reached Black Tail Creek, (so named after the black tail deer), which we followed down to Nelson River. After crossing Nelson River we passed over a low range of mountains and down into Boulder Valley, the place we set out to reach. In spite of the high recommendation given this valley as a place to winter cattle, I did not like it, and we moved on up the river about fifty miles, and reached a place where the grass was abundant, but the frost had killed it. Curl thought this was the place to stop, but I was not satisfied. I saw no bunch grass, and my experience with cattle in California told me that we would not be safe unless we found a place where bunch grass grew on the mountain sides. However, we camped at this point and remained a few days to look about. Just above our camp a small creek, which seemed to come down from a big mountain in the distance, put into Boulder River. Curl and I passed up this creek toward the mountain, which was covered with snow. Some miles up we found the finest bunch grass I ever saw growing upon the low hills which surrounded the high peak. We spent the whole day looking over the place and went so far as to select the site for our cabin. Returning to camp, entirely satisfied with our day's work, we planned for the winter. Next morning early we were on our way to the mountain home we had

selected. The grade was steep, our wagons were heavy and there was no road. We had to circle about the hills and wind and twist in order to get along at all. It was nearly night when we arrived at the spot selected.

I had expected, from reports given me, to find a white settlement in Boulder Valley, but there was none, and if there was a white person within fifty miles of our camp that night we did not know it. Virginia City and Helena were mining towns about a hundred miles apart, and we were half way between them. I could hardly have found a place in the whole western country where the chance of meeting a white man was so small. It was, by good fortune, the very spot I set out to find when I left Missouri. I told my friends when I left that I was going out among the savage Indians for protection against the "yard dog" militia, who had not been in the war, and who only commenced fighting after the war was over and returning Confederate soldiers were at their mercy.

A hurried camp, such as we were accustomed to make when traveling, was all we did the night of our arrival. Next morning we were up bright and early and, after attention to the cattle to see that none of them had strayed, we began building our winter home. We had but one axe and one shovel—one implement for each of us. Abundance of pine and cedar grew near. I took the axe and began cutting the logs while Curl with the shovel leveled the earth upon the site selected for the cabin. Curl's task was soon done, but not until I had a number of logs ready to be taken in. The oxen were then yoked and as fast as the logs were cut they were dragged in. When we decided logs enough were upon the ground, building began. It was slow work and hard work. Each log had to be raised and laid in its place and notched carefully so that it would hold

firm and leave as little space as possible to be "chinked." When the proper height for the eaves had been reached, we elevated one side by adding logs to give slant to the roof. Stout poles were then laid side by side, over which we spread a thick layer of cedar branches and covered the whole with gravel. We chinked the spaces between the logs and plastered over the chinking with mortar made of mud. We then cut out a door, over which we hung a heavy blanket, and with such stones as we could select, suitable to be used, built a fire-place, laying the stones in the same kind of mortar used in the chinking. Thus we had a house without a nail or a piece of iron about it.

Before I left Salt Lake, I bought two fine greyhounds. I trained them to sleep just inside our door. I told Curl they must serve as a lock to our door. They were faithful and obedient and I knew no Indian could get near us without warning. I felt more secure when I lay down to sleep with those dogs by my door than if I had had a puncheon door, barred and locked.

We moved into our cabin late in October, and I felt for the first time in more than four years that I was at home. I was glad also to get a rest. I had left Red River, fifty miles above Shreveport, in April, walked the seven hundred miles to Buchanan County, fighting, running and hiding—much of the time without food, as I have related; then twelve hundred miles to Salt Lake, with a week's rest, then six hundred miles to Boulder Valley—six months of trial and hardship which few men are called upon to endure. In view of this I looked upon my winter in the cabin, in spite of its loneliness, with a good deal of pleasure.

There was an abundance of game all about us. Elk, deer, antelope, bear, moose, and smaller game, grouse, pheasants and sage hens plentiful. Elk was my

favorite meat, and, while we had great variety, I always kept as much as one hind quarter of elk hanging upon the corner of our cabin. Any day I chose I could take my gun and go out upon the mountain side among the cattle and bring back just such meat as my appetite fancied.

We lived thus until near the first of the year 1866, without once seeing a human face—either white man or Indian. One morning about the time mentioned, Curl and I went out to get our ponies when we saw a dozen buck Indians chasing an antelope down the valley. Some were on foot and some on ponies. We hurriedly climbed up the side of a mountain which gave us an extended view of the whole plain, and to our astonishment we saw, about three miles away, a perfect village of wigwams. We were no longer without neighbors. Curl was considerably alarmed, but I told him we had nothing to fear, except that our game would not be so plentiful and so easily procured. He asked me how I knew we were in no danger. I pointed to the squaws, and pappooses which we could see about the village, and told him that my experience with Indians was that they were always peaceable when they had their families along. I told him, however, that we must be discreet and make friends with them, and assured him that I knew how to do that and that he must follow my advice.

Out of extra caution we went back to the cabin and immediately put all our guns in good condition. We had hardly finished our task, when about noon, two Indians ran upon our cabin, to their utter astonishment. They stopped and looked in consternation. Our dogs went after them and I had hard work to make the dogs understand that they must not harm them. When the dogs were quiet I went up to them, showing my friendli-

ness in every way I could. They answered me with signs showing that they too were friendly. When I had convinced them I meant no harm, I had them come into the cabin, and there I tried to find out what their plans were in the valley. I could understand but little they said, but I felt perfectly sure that by proper cultivation we should soon become quite friendly.

I then set food before them. I had a kettle of thoroughly cooked navy beans simmering over our fire. I filled a couple of pans from the kettle, set them out and provided bread and meat. They went in on the beans and ate them ravenously. I tried to induce them to eat bread and meat, but not a morsel would they touch, but kept calling for beans. I told Curl we must find some way to stop them if possible, as so many beans in their starved stomachs might make them sick and the tribe would think we had poisoned them. We both then began to make all manner of signs toward the bread and meat, but it was useless. The two ate the entire kettle of beans and looked around for more. When they saw the beans were gone, they ate large quantities of bread and meat, and made signs that they were much pleased with their meal. When they left they made us understand that we were invited to see them. They pointed to their camp and said "wakee up." We made them understand that we would come and when they were gone I told Curl we must keep our promise.

Next day we saddled our horses, buckled our navies on the outside of our clothes and each with a rifle in front across the horn of the saddle, rode down. The dogs followed us. When we rode up the squaws and pappooses ran for the tents like chickens that have seen a hawk in the air. But few bucks were in camp, the majority of them being out hunting. Fortunately for us

one of the bucks who had dined with us so heartily on beans the day before was lying in his tent (perfectly well, to our surprise), and when the alarm was given he came out and recognized us. He came up and bade us welcome, and invited us into his tent. I was surprised to see how comfortably he was fixed. The poles of his tent were probably twenty feet long and tied together at the top. The lower ends of the poles were set in a wide circle, making a room twelve or fourteen feet across. It was a cold, winter day and a small stick fire was burning in the center directly beneath an opening at the top of the tent. The draft was such that the smoke all arose and escaped from the tent. They had gathered pine needles and packed them upon the floor around the fire and over them had spread dressed buffalo robes, making as fine a carpet as I ever set foot upon.

We sat down by the fire and talked as much as we could to our host, making him understand that we were entirely friendly. Our dogs, seeing the good feeling between the Indians and ourselves, accepted the situation and throughout the entire winter made no hostile demonstrations toward them except when they came about the cabin. From this visit the whole tribe became aware that we were friendly, and within a very short time the very best feeling prevailed.

Their only means of subsistence was the game they killed, and as they had no weapons but bows and arrows it required almost constant effort upon the part of the bucks to keep the tribe supplied with food. They were very clever in their methods and would bring in game when white men under such circumstances would have failed entirely. One of their favorite plans was this: Fifty or more would mount their ponies and make a wide circle, driving always toward Cottonwood

Creek. The banks of this stream were very steep and there were but few crossing places. The antelope on becoming alarmed would start for these crossings, and as they passed down the narrow gulches, other Indians with bows and arrows waylaid them from behind rocks and brush, and shot them down. They did wonders with their bows and arrows, but many antelope passed through without being touched. Others, though wounded, escaped.

We soon began to join in these hunts, and I have from my station behind a rock at one of these crossings killed as many as fifteen antelope in a single hunt. I was an expert with the navy in those days and rarely missed a shot. I always gave them every one to the Indians, as neither Curl nor I cared for antelope meat, and they were, of course, greatly pleased and regarded us both with our skill and navies as fortunate acquisitions, and we lost nothing by our kindness to them.

We had a hundred and sixteen head of cattle and four horses. The Indians had about two hundred ponies. All herded and grazed together in that valley for four months. When the Indians left in the spring we rounded up our cattle and found every one of them.

About the first of May, 1866, we moved our cattle over on Indian Creek, about forty miles north. There was a little mining town near and we set up a butcher shop, furnishing our own beeves to it. The town was not large enough to enable us to do much business and, after two months, we moved to Helena, another mining town, but larger than the first. At that time Virginia City was the capital of the territory. By the first of September we had disposed of all our cattle one way or another and were ready for something else.

While we were deciding what next to do, Brother William and his family arrived in Helena. I had not seen him for six years—since he and Brother Zack left me at home in 1860 to care for father while they went back to California to look after the cattle. I had heard little from our ranch and our cattle in California, but was hardly prepared to learn that war times had been so bad there. From William I learned that great lawlessness prevailed in California and that our cattle had been shot and driven away and that long before the war was over William and Zack had nothing left but their families. They went to Idaho and mined a while, and then on to Montana. While in Idaho, Brother James, who had escaped from prison in St. Louis—and a death sentence also—had managed to join them with his family. James and Zack had bought a drove of cattle and had them in another portion of Montana, so William, Curl and I decided to come home.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Return to Missouri.

It was too late in the fall when this decision was reached to make the trip by land, and we began to look about for an opportunity to go by the river. Two men were fitting up a flat boat at Fort Benton, a hundred miles down the river from Helena. We all—William, his wife and little daughter, Curl and myself got in William's two-horse wagon and made our way over to Fort Benton. There were no white people living between the two places, and we were told that it was not safe to attempt the journey, as the Indians had killed and robbed many persons on that road. We were too well acquainted with Indians to be much afraid of them, so we decided to go. We saw no Indians, but I was robbed one night. William and his family slept in the wagon, Curl and I under it. One night a coyote slipped up and stole a sack of vension from under the back part of my pillow. That was the second experience of that kind. The other, which I think I have related, happened years before in California.

When I left with Turner at St. Joseph I was on the west side of the Missouri River. When I reached Fort Benton I was on the east side, and that was the first time I had seen the river since I had left it at St. Joseph. I had gone entirely around it.

The boat that was being rigged out was a curious affair. It had no steam, no sails and no oars—just a flat bottomed scow with a rudder—designed to float with the current. The only equipment for navigation besides the rudder was a number of long poles to be used in aiding the boat off of sand bars. About two-

thirds of the floor space of the boat was housed in by stretching dry raw hides two deep over a heavy frame work, leaving port holes at convenient places through which our guns could be directed at the Indians in case of attack. The boat was built by Sloan and Parcell, two men from Iowa, and they were very proud of their craft.

When everything was ready, fifty passengers got aboard, including two families, and the cable was cut. The current was swift and we went down at a gait so rapid that it was almost alarming, but we soon grew accustomed to it. While in the mountains we frequently came to shoals and riffles over which the boat dashed at a speed that turned us dizzy, but we had to stay with it and trust to the man at the rudder to keep her straight ahead.

At the mouth of the Yellowstone, we passed a tribe of Indians in camp. The boat drifted around a little curve and up within forty yards of the bank on which the camp was situated before we noticed them. They were more surprised, I think, than we, for they stood looking until we passed entirely out of sight. It snowed all that day, and next morning we were drifting through mushy ice which sometimes threatened to squeeze our boat. We were in constant fear of a gorge and tried several times to reach the shore and land, but could not get through the ice. Had our boat encountered a gorge it is probable that the whole crew would have been drowned. Late in the afternoon a south wind began to blow and in a few hours the river was nearly clear. This was a great relief.

We had calculated on reaching St. Joseph in a month and had laid in provisions accordingly. When we struck the Bad Lands the current of the river became so sluggish that we could scarcely perceive that we were traveling. We had plenty of flour, but no

meat, so every now and then, slow as we were going, we had to tie up and get out and kill a deer or an antelope. Sometimes this required a good deal of time, as our luck in hunting was bad. The current got so slow and the prospects of getting into swifter water looked so bad, that we rigged up a set of oars out of long cottonwood poles cut on the banks and flattened. With these we set the men at work by turns, two to each oar, night and day and made much better progress. I think if we had waited for the current we should not have reached home before June of the next year. When we reached Yankton we got additional supplies and finally reached Sioux City, where we found an opportunity to take the stage to Omaha, and did so. At Omaha we got a steamboat to St. Joseph, and reached home late in October, two months and a half out of Fort Benton.

I found conditions in Missouri much better than when I left. The war was really over. The militia had all been discharged and there was now no longer any excuse for killing and robbing men. After such a long period of lawlessness it required some time, of course, to reduce everything to order and to secure a rigid enforcement of the law, but I was surprised and gratified at the progress that had been made. I passed a very pleasant winter with relatives and friends, and it began to look like I would be able to settle down and live in peace. There were those in the community who were disappointed with the results of the war to themselves because they had expected to get possession of the land belonging to Confederate soldiers. In fact, our negroes told me during the war that certain men had said the Gibson boys could never come back to this country, and they intended to get their land. Of course, my presence at home with every prospect of remaining naturally displeased those who had designs upon

my land and that which belonged to my brothers, and I could hardly hope to remain unmolested—especially as all the public officials were ready to give willing ear to every report against me.

About the first of March, after I had lived publicly and peaceably in my home community and in St. Joseph all winter, a man named Joe Lemons, who was the tool of other men whom I knew, swore out a warrant charging me with stealing his horse during the war. As soon as I heard the warrant was out my blood went up to the old war heat, but I said nothing. I made no attempt to escape or to conceal myself, but went about my business. A few days later I had business in St. Joseph and went up as usual, determined to have no trouble if I could avoid it. I was standing in front of Nave and McCord's wholesale grocery house, talking to my brother Isaac, when Phelps, a deputy sheriff, came up and asked me if my name was Jim Gibson. I told him my name was John Gibson. He then said, "I guess I have got a writ for you." I said, "Have you? Let's hear it." He had a heavy shawl or blanket around his shoulders, such as men wore in those days. His hands were both concealed beneath the shawl, and when I asked to hear the writ he drew his left hand with the writ in it from under his shawl and in so doing moved the shawl from over his right hand and I saw that he held a six-shooter with that hand. I did not move or make any attempt to resist him, but stood until he, trembling like a leaf, had read the writ. When he had finished, I waited for him to say what should be done next, but he stood some moments greatly embarrassed, and said nothing. Finally I said, "Well, what about it?" His courage then came to him sufficiently for him to say: "You will have to go to the court house with me." I said, "all right," and turned and asked brother Isaac

to go along with me. We started to the court house and just then old Fish, the sheriff, came galloping up with his big spurs on his heels and jumped off his horse. He blustered up and slapped me on the shoulder and said, "you d—d horse thief — — give up your arms." I put my hand on his breast and shoved him off the sidewalk, and in stepping off the curbstone he fell. He got up and he and Phelps stood looking at me. I did not say "what about it" any more, but started on toward the court house. When I had got about ten steps away Fish said to Phelps, "Why don't you shoot him?" Phelps said he did not want to kill anybody and Fish then said, "Give me the gun, I will shoot him." With that he snatched the gun from Phelps and pointed it at me. I jerked my gun from my side and leveled it at him. He lowered his gun instantly and I turned and walked on. Fish then began to yell, "Catch him! Catch him!" keeping all the time a good, safe distance behind. He followed me to Edmond Street, all the time keeping up his yell and by that time he had raised half the town, it seemed to me. Everybody, policemen and all, ran out to see what was the trouble with old Fish. I passed on up Edmond Street and came to a man with a stick of wood in his hand. He raised it and told me to stop. I told him to drop his stick and not to bother me. He obeyed and I walked on. I turned on Fourth Street and went into a feed stable, and through it to an alley, and then around to the south side of the stable. No one was near me and I stopped. I had stood but an instant when a brother of Phelps, the deputy sheriff, came running toward me. I drew my gun and asked him what he wanted. He turned and ran. There was a board fence about five feet high in front of him. He sprang up on it on his breast and turned a somersault over it into the alley and struck the ground flat on his back. I had

to laugh at the frightened fool and that put me in a better humor. I went to Fourth Street and went into the back door of a barber shop. The front door was closed, but there was a great throng standing outside and Fish was still yelling. The crowd was quiet and orderly. I had been in the shop a few minutes when I heard some one say, "Don't go in there, that man will shoot you!" Another man said, "If you will go in I will go with you?" At that time I did not intend to hurt anyone and if Fish had let me alone I would have been at the court house, for I knew there was no case against me. But just as the conversation I have related took place Fish and his man jumped in at the back door, Fish with his navy cocked and pointed at my breast. He called out in a loud voice, "Now, you d—d horse thief —— give up your arms!" That was too much for me to take a second time. The last word was not out of his mouth until the muzzle of my six-shooter was against his neck and hell was blazing inside of me. I pulled the trigger, the cap burst with loud noise but the gun, for the first time in my experience with it, failed to go. Fish thought he was shot and fell backward out at the door. Three policemen entering by the front door came up behind and grabbed me and took my guns away from me. By this time Fish had come to himself and jumped back in the back door and shot at me. I knocked the muzzle of the gun up and the ball went into the ceiling. My little finger hit the end of the gun just as it was discharged and the ball grazed the flesh off down to the bone. A policeman caught Fish and pushed him back and said, "Nobody but a d—d coward would shoot a prisoner."

Fish and his brave deputies then formed a procession and started me off to the court house. Phelps, to whom I had really surrendered on the reading of the

writ, and who I think understood all along that there would have been no trouble but for Fish's insulting bluster, led me by the arm. Fish walked behind with my two navies—one in each hand, and one other deputy loaded down with guns rode Fish's horse by my side. Another deputy, whose name I will not mention, an old school mate of mine, remained far behind, thinking, I suppose, that I had not seen him. I had met him on Felix Street a half hour before Phelps presented the writ to me and as soon as Phelps came up I knew where he had received information that I was in town. This deputy knew that I would not resist arrest if treated with anything like decency, and might have had me go with him to the court house upon his request even without a writ, but this method did not suit the bragging, make-believe methods of the men who were vainly trying to convince the community of their bravery.

As the procession moved with the desperate man up Fifth Street, attracting the attention of everybody, greatly to the satisfaction of the brave fellows who had made the capture, I said to Phelps, that he need not hold my arm as I would not attempt to run. Fish, who heard the remark, said to Phelps, "Turn him loose and let him run." I halted and turned to Fish and said, "If you will give me one of my navies I will run!" I would have done exactly what I said, and Fish knew it, I think, for he would not give me the gun. I had no idea he would accept my challenge, but I stopped his pretense at bravery and showed him to be exactly the coward that he was.

When we reached the office, Fish, who was an old-timer at the business, went through my pockets. He knew just where to lay his hand to get my money and took from my inside vest pocket eighty dollars in

greenbacks, but before he did this he made my brother leave the office so he could not see how much money he took from me. After getting my money he turned me into the jail and locked me in a cold cell without fire or blankets. I lay on the cold rocks and shivered all night with my finger bleeding on me.

Next day was a busy one for Fish. My friends came in by the dozen to see me and Fish would not let them talk to me through the hole in the wall out of his presence, so they kept him standing by most of the day to hear what was said. My old friend Curl came in. He asked me if I wanted to get out. I told him I thought I would get out in a short time. Curl said, "If you want out today I will go and get enough men to take you out." Fish did not open his mouth, but I told Curl I thought I had better wait and give bond. Shortly after that Judge Parker, who stood in with Fish, fixed my bond at twenty thousand dollars, thinking, I suppose, that I could not give it and that I would have to lie in jail until my trial came off. They were mistaken in this. I gave the twenty thousand bond—and could have given a hundred thousand as well—and was released. I walked down town and presently met Fish. He ran up and shook hands with me as though he was greatly pleased to see me, and said, "I thought you had gone." I said, "No, this is my home and I intend to remain here." I never saw Fish after that that he did not go out of his way to speak to me and shake hands with me. I knew his object was to make fair weather with me, but he had nothing to fear. I was over my anger and would not have harmed a hair of his head so long as he did not provoke me as he had done on the day of my arrest.

After meeting Fish I went on, and on Third Street I met two policemen. They asked me to go into a saloon and have a drink. I went in and took a toddy and while there one of them slipped a Colt's navy in my hand and told me to protect myself. I felt much safer with such and old acquaintance with me, for I did not know when some of my old war enemies might undertake to make trouble for me.

Two indictments were pending against me—one for horse stealing and one for an assault upon Fish with intent to kill. I went about my affairs until court convened. On the morning the case was called Fish and Lemons were both present. I went in and sat down very close to them and where I could look directly in their faces. Neither of them would look at me, but kept their eyes upon the floor or wandering about the court room. My counsel, Judge Tutt, took a change of venue and the cases were sent to Platte City.

Judge Parker gave me an order upon Fish for my money and my guns. Brother William, who had returned from the west, went with me to get them. We got the money and one gun. Fish said the other gun had been taken to Easton by one of his deputies and that he would get it for us later. In a few days William and I went back for the other gun and on our way to the court house met Fish, hurrying away to catch a train, so he said. When we asked him about the gun he said he would not stop to talk to us as he was in a great hurry. William told him he would stop, that he came for that gun and intended to have it. Fish insisted that he did not have time to get it for us. William said, "time or no time, we will have that gun and have it now!" So we turned him round and marched him to the court house and got the navy and told him he might then go to his train.

Court convened in Platte City in May. I felt sure that neither Fish nor Lemons would appear against me. Fish had said that he had found a man that would shoot and that he had taken desperate chances in attempting to arrest me. I knew he was afraid of his shadow and that Platte County was the scene of many of his misdeeds during the war. As for Lemons, and the horse stealing charge, I felt equally sure there would be no prosecution, but on the day court convened I went down prepared for trial. I reached Platte City the day before the case was to be called. I met the sheriff of that county and told him about my case. He asked me who the sheriff of Buchanan County was, and when I told him he said Fish would never come to Platte County; that he had done too much mischief there during the war, hanging and robbing gray-haired men.

Next morning when court opened I walked inside the bar and directly in front of the judge. No one knew me. The judge opened his docket and commenced calling over the cases. In a few moments he called my case and no one answered. He called the second time and I arose and said, "the defendant is present and ready for trial." "Where is he?" asked the judge. "I am the man," said I. The judge then asked where my counsel was. I told him I had none; that Judge Tutt of St. Joseph had promised to look after my cases, but he had not yet arrived. The judge then told the sheriff to go to the front door and call the prosecuting witnesses three times. The sheriff did so but no one answered. The cases were dismissed and I was released from my heavy bonds and went out of the court room a free man, much to the satisfaction of my good friends, Matt Evans, Bennett Reece, Ham Ray, Tom Finch and others who had gone along as witnesses.

The cases were dismissed in May, 1867. I came home from Platte City and from that day to this have never heard of them. Lemons said his horse was taken from the stable at twelve o'clock, broad daylight. The truth is that at ten o'clock the night before he claimed his horse was taken, and while I was not in the country, that same man, with others, led away from my place eleven head of horses and mules and no member of my family ever saw them again. I never thought of calling them to account for it. It was war times, and, after the war was over, I felt too thankful to have escaped with my life ever to attempt to hold the conduct of any man during that period against him.

I went to work at whatever I could find to do to make an honest living. All my toil and hardship on the plains, by which I had accumulated a comfortable fortune before the war, had been spent in vain, and I had to begin anew and under very trying conditions. I asked nothing but to be let alone, and it now looked as if this wish of my heart might be gratified.

In a short time my prospects were much improved, and on the 25th day of August, 1868, I was married. Since that time I have, aside from a few months spent in Colorado during the early eighties, farmed and dealt in cattle in Missouri and Nebraska. I own the farm on which I live, have reared my children to maturity, and educated them as best I could, and, though often lonely when I think of my brothers and companions of earlier years, I am, in spite of my eighty-three years, enjoying good health and the added blessing of many friends.

THE END.

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